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Prince Edward's girlfriend denies they've split up

LONDON (R) — Prince Edward's romance is still on the cards, British newspapers say. They quote the prince's girlfriend, Shona Smart, as saying: "It's not a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. We're not a couple. We're just friends."

Smart, who is 25, is said to be a former model and a friend of the prince's. She is also said to be a friend of the prince's mother, the Queen Mother.

The prince is 34 and is said to be a member of the Royal Air Force. He is also said to be a member of the Royal Household.

Smart is said to be a friend of the prince's since they were both at school. She is also said to be a friend of the prince's mother.

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Another Saudi diplomat defects

NICOSIA (AP) — A Saudi Arabian diplomat on Wednesday declared he was seeking asylum in London over human rights abuses in his homeland, becoming the second prominent Saudi Arab diplomat to defect. Ahmad Al Zahran, who until recently was Saudi Arabia's deputy consul in Houston, Texas, issued a press release announcing his defection and efforts to seek asylum. Mr. Zahran said he took the action after finding he was no longer able to tolerate "the breaches of human rights" in his homeland, including the right to freedom of expression and political association, according to the press release distributed by a London-based Saudi human rights group. The Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) in Saudi Arabia said it was contacted by Mr. Zahran after he arrived in London and expressed its hope the second case of defection of a senior Saudi diplomat within a month, said the CDLR in a cover letter accompanying Mr. Zahran's statement.

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Arafat names council for Nablus

TUNIS (R) — Yasser Arafat, head of the new Palestinian self-rule authority, has named an interim municipal council for the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Nablus, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported on Wednesday. Elected Nablus Mayor Ghassan Al-Shakaa, sacked by the Israeli military administration in 1986 for membership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mainstream Fatah movement, was named as mayor. PLO sources said the 16-member council included supporters of the various Palestinian factions. Wafa said the council was temporary, pending new municipal elections within one year.

Iran restates island claim

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Wednesday urged the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to retract its "baseless" claims of sovereignty over three strategic islands to avoid tension in the region, the official news agency IRNA said. A Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by IRNA, warned "baseless claims" over the Gulf islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb were in the "interest of foreign powers and could mar regional stability." He was speaking after UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan said his country would never give up its claim to the islands, adding the row with Iran had created an "obstacle to normalising relations." The UAE should "avoid its territorial claims and respect the full sovereignty of neighbouring Iran" over the islands, spokesman Mahdi Mohammadi said.

Iran reports explosion at port

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran's state-run news agency reported an explosion at the Imam Khomeini port at the northern tip of the Gulf Wednesday. The Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Cyprus, said "an explosion was heard" at the port at 4 p.m. (11:30 GMT). The brief five-line dispatch said "no information is yet available on the cause of the explosion, extent of damage or casualty, if any." The Imam Khomeini port is home to a partially-built petrochemical refinery.

Sabah case back in criminal court

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's top court, in a case watched closely around the Gulf, on Wednesday left a criminal court the choice of whether to try a senior member of the ruling Sabah family on charges of making illegal profits. The constitutional court, tackling an issue raised repeatedly at the trial of former oil and finance minister Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah, said it could not rule on the validity of parliament's repeal of a law allowing ministers to be tried by special courts. "The court rules its non-jurisdiction in the case," Constitutional Court President Mohammad Youssef Al Rifai told reporters after the court's five judges made their decision. "The constitutional court looks only into the constitutionality of legislation, and this does not apply to the decision of the national assembly," Mr. Rifai said.

Saudis reach second round

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saudi Arabia, who nearly pulled off a major upset against the Netherlands, completed the effort on Wednesday, stunning European power Belgium 1-0 on a solo run by Saeed Owaيران to advance to the second round of the World Cup. Holland also reached the second round of the World Cup with a 2-1 victory over Morocco (see details on page 11).

Arafat to visit Gaza Saturday

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN leader Yasser Arafat made a surprise announcement Wednesday that he plans to make his historic return to Palestinian territory by this weekend — the first visit since Palestinian autonomy began in May.

A senior Israeli government minister said the government had approved Mr. Arafat's visit, which would start Saturday.

"The prime minister decided tonight to allow this visit after considering all security considerations, and the visit will take place this Saturday," Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said.

Mr. Rabin warned that the three-day trip had to be coordinated with Israeli security services.

Earlier Mr. Arafat's top adviser Nabil Shaath said Mr. Arafat would travel to Gaza "either on Friday evening or Saturday morning."

Mr. Arafat will be returning to the Gaza Strip for the first time in 27 years.

Dr. Shaath said he would be accompanied by a 100-strong Palestinian delegation.

The PLO leader is also due to spend one day in the autonomous Jericho area in the West Bank.

"There is now a decision. He (Arafat) will go to both the Gaza Strip and Jericho. It

is not important from where he will enter," Mr. Arafat's adviser Marwan Kanafani told Reuters in Tunis.

Mr. Arafat last set foot in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during a clandestine trip shortly after Israel occupied those territories in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

"He's going to stay in Gaza most of the time, he will go to Jericho and come back to Gaza and then he will leave out of Gaza to Egypt again and then to Paris," said Dr. Shaath, minister of cooperation for the new self-rule authority.

Mr. Arafat is due to meet Mr. Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Paris on July 6.

In Tel Aviv, Mr. Rabin warned earlier that Mr. Arafat will not be allowed into the Gaza Strip unless the visit is coordinated with Israeli security.

"One thing is sure — such a visit to Gaza will not take place unless it is coordinated with us," he said.

But Dr. Shaath, speaking to journalists in Cairo, denied that Mr. Arafat needed "authorisation" for the visit.

"He's going to Palestine, to Gaza and Jericho. It needs coordination and I am doing the coordination. He does not really need permission to go. We need to coordinate and there is no problem in

that," he said.

Dr. Shaath said Arafat "will not have the chance to visit Jerusalem this time" because more elaborate preparations are required.

Mr. Arafat's visit to the self-rule areas had been postponed from mid-June until mid-July after PLO officials complained that international donors had been late in sending the financial support needed for autonomy.

But explaining the timing of Mr. Arafat's visit, Dr. Shaath said: "When he felt the time was right, he decided to go."

The way was cleared for the visit after Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin signed the May 4 deal in Cairo that launched limited autonomy in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

Security guards Wednesday sealed off the luxury villa overlooking the sea where Mr. Arafat is expected to spend the weekend in Gaza.

Two senior police officers booked all 24 rooms in the new Palestine Hotel on the beach for Mr. Arafat's visit, owner Sufian Al Sheikh said.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Arafat would first meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Alexandria Friday morning, and then "fly to the nearest airport to Palestine."

Al Arish in the Sinai peninsula.

(Continued on page 12)

Algiers blasts injure many; opposition leader unhurt

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algerian opposition leader Said Sadi escaped unhurt from an apparent assassination attempt Wednesday but a women's rights leader was among around 51 injured in the attack, Algerian security forces said.

A statement said 14 of the injured were in serious condition and that many of those hurt when two bombs exploded during a demonstration were trampled on in the panic that erupted as thousands sought to flee.

Three journalists, two Algerians and a Frenchman, were among the injured, witnesses said.

Khalida Messaoudi, 39, the president of the Independent Association for the Triumph of the Rights of Women, was also among the victims when the bombs exploded along a tree-lined road on the protesters' route, leaving a cloud of thick, black smoke hanging over the city.

The protests had been called to demand a proper inquiry into the assassination a year ago of Algerian President Mohammed Boudiaf.

Early reports said there had been no deaths and no claim of responsibility for the attack. The injured were taken by other demonstrators to the nearby Mustapha hospital.

Mr. Sadi, the leader of the opposition Movement of the Republic (MPR), had just passed close-by the road when the bombs went off.

There was no immediate information on the condition of Ms. Messaoudi, a mathematics professor and an executive member of the MPR.

For the past five years Ms. Messaoudi has been a leading figure in the Algerian feminist movement, demanding an end to the family code which permits polygamy and restricts women's rights, in line with Islamic law.

She has frequently been the target of death threats and lives in hiding, only making public appearances at demonstrations staged by the democracy movement.

Mr. Sadi's grouping is an umbrella organisation bringing together the opponents of talks between the Algerian

government and Islamic fundamentalists.

He has called for the formation of a "democratic alliance" to confront the banned Islamic Salvation Front and was one of the movers behind the military's cancellation of second round of legislative elections in January 1992 which the front was poised to win.

Protesters demanded the truth about Boudiaf's murder two years ago in Annaba. The man suspected of carrying out the murder, a young officer of an elite security corps, Boumaraf Lembarak, is due to face trial.

Lieutenant Lembarak was arrested shortly after the 1992 shooting. An official commission concluded he acted alone in shooting Boudiaf dead, taking advantage of what it said was serious negligence in the president's security cover.

In an interview broadcast earlier on Wednesday on France Inter Radio, Fatima Boudiaf said her husband's assassins had sought to destroy the democracy he was building.



A South Yemeni soldier, carrying an anti-tank rocket launcher (RPG), watches the road to the capital Aden from the last southern checkpoint (AFP photo)

Aden refinery ablaze as fighting intensifies

Combined agency dispatches

ATTACKING warplanes on Wednesday set the south's only oil refinery on fire as northern troops rocketed Aden, killing 16 civilians and wounding 71 others, officials said.

Thick, black smoke blocked out the summer sun after it drifted over the city from the burning refinery 18 kilometres to the west where rival troops also battled on the ground.

A southern spokesman said two northern warplanes attacked the refinery, the second time in three weeks that the complex was set on fire by attacking aircraft.

Anti-aircraft guns shot down three warplanes raiding the refinery and other targets, a military spokesman added. "The body of one of the pilots was found completely burned," he added.

Salvoes of Katyusha rockets slammed into residential areas at Dar Saad and Sheikh Osman and other areas of the port city killing the 16, including seven children, hospital officials said.

Fighting was also raging 70 kilometres from the port of Mukalla where southern leader Ali Salem Al Beidh took refuge in the early days of the war, a military official said.

He said the south had stopped the northern advance at Maifaa, northwest of Mukalla, 700 kilometres from here. The north claimed Mr. Beidh had fled Mukalla for an Arab country, but the south said he met tribal leaders there on Tuesday.

The northern Yemeni news agency SABA claimed Mr. Beidh had left Yemen for medical treatment in another Arab country, according to Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo, which added the report had not been confirmed

by any independent source.

Tehran Radio quoted SABA as saying Mr. Beidh has been wounded, apparently in the fighting.

For weeks, official northern media have been portraying Mr. Beidh as a rebel on the run. But earlier reports that he had abandoned beleaguered Aden for the eastern city of Mukalla were later substantiated.

The new battlefield advances came as the U.N. Security Council deliberated over a possible resolution involving a new ceasefire call in the war, observers to monitor it, and resumption of political dialogue.

And in a modest breakthrough, the first high-level meeting between north and south took place at U.N. headquarters in New York Tuesday.

Abdul Karim Al Iryani, planning minister and a close confidant of northern President Ali Abdullah Saleh, met with Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, prime minister of the self-proclaimed southern government.

Mr. Attas told reporters they were close to agreement on a ceasefire monitoring mission of Arab, African and Asian troops.

The civil war erupted on May 4 four years after the former conservative North and the Marxist South were merged in an uneasy union.

Five ceasefires have collapsed since the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution June 1 calling for an immediate end to hostilities and the start of talks.

Heavy fighting was going on Wednesday in the oil-rich Shabwa province as southern troops sought to recapture the town of Ataq.

Meanwhile, Egyptian envoy Badr Hamman arrived in the capital Sanaa carrying

a message from President Hosni Mubarak to his Yemeni counterpart Ali Abdullah Saleh in a bid to broker a truce and get the two sides talking.

Reports said northern forces on Wednesday scored new gains, southern secessionists holed up in Aden, seizing Aden's water supply station, radio transmitters and a command base.

But Mujallid Al Moradi, a northern officer, warned that a forcible entry into Aden — a crowded metropolis overflowing with war refugees — would exact a heavy toll in lives.

"If our leaders ask us to go in, there will be a lot of blood spilled," the U.S.-educated officer told reporters in the Sabir front-line village about 20 kilometres north of central Aden.

In Aden residents took flight, leaving their homes and seeking out the safety of more sheltered areas such as the Crater district — afforded some protection by the hills which surround it.

North and south fought with automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets at Hisswa along the coastal road to the refinery, where one of the city's power stations is based, 10 kilometres from the city centre.

A motorist who tried to drive through the lines was beaten back under a hail of northern fire, his car splattered with bullet holes.

Fighting was also going on at Bir Nasser 15 kilometres north of Aden where the city's sole pumping station is sited.

The station was reported Monday to have been destroyed and the International Committee of the Red Cross warned the city is on the edge of a "catastrophe" as water supplies dwindle.

Jordan, Paris Club reach agreement

PARIS (AP) — Creditor governments have agreed to a "major" rescheduling of Jordan's official foreign debt, the French economics ministry said Wednesday.

The rescheduling follows an accord between Jordan and the International Monetary Fund in May.

The amount of debt covered by the accord was not disclosed in the ministry statement.

According to official Jordanian government figures, total debt service came to \$1.44 billion in 1992. Total external debt was slightly under \$7 billion, most of it due other governments.

Creditor nations meeting on Jordan's debt, grouped in the so-called Paris Club, included Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, Britain and the United States.

Israel frees 500 prisoners

GAZA (Agencies) — Israel freed hundreds of jailed Palestinians on Wednesday, a key step towards widening the scope of its peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Witnesses in Gaza said about 12 buses carrying more than 300 prisoners arrived at the entrance to the Palestinian self-rule area of Gaza and were welcomed by Palestinian policemen and relatives.

While the prisoners were being released, PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said in Cairo that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat planned to make a landmark visit to Gaza on Friday.

The Israeli army confirmed the release, saying freed prisoners would go to their homes in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. But it gave no numbers.

Israel Television said that in all, 550 men, mainly from groups opposed to the peace deal, were being freed.

Dr. Shaath has said the release of Palestinians still in Israeli jails was a first step towards widening self-rule in occupied West Bank.

"The prisoners have become the most important problem in the psyche of the Palestinian people, and I think it's justified that we should really take a step towards a solution," he said after meeting Israeli negotiators on Tuesday.

Israel has freed about 3,500 of 5,000 prisoners it agreed to release under the agreement signed in Cairo last month with the PLO.

The army says 1,300 more inmates slated for release remained behind bars for refusing to sign a pledge renouncing violence.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have expressed disappointment and anger that the PLO failed to persuade Israel to free all 9,600 prisoners it held before the releases began.

A further sticking point has been Israel's insistence prisoners serving life terms be confined to autonomy areas. This has kept freed West Bank residents from returning to their homes outside the cramped Jericho self-rule enclave.

Hisham Abdul Razek, a senior PLO official in Gaza, said Palestinians were making special efforts to persuade prisoners to sign the non-violence pledge.

Prisoner releases are seen as a major test of the PLO's ability to rally grass-roots support for the pact under which Palestinians took control of Jericho and much of the Gaza Strip.

Japan gets first socialist prime minister since 1946

Tomiichi Murayama takes over from Hata

TOKYO (AP) — After a bruising power struggle that left several political parties in disarray, Parliament on Wednesday named Social Democratic Party (SDP) Chairman Tomiichi Murayama as Japan's next prime minister.

Mr. Murayama, the first socialist leader since 1948 to serve as Japan's prime minister, will head a coalition dominated by Japan's largest party, the Liberal Democrats (LDP), who ruled the country from 1955 until they were forced from power last summer.

Meeting just hours before the end of its current session on Wednesday, parliament's 511-seat lower house elected Mr. Murayama prime minister 261 to 214. He succeeds

Tsutomu Hata, forced to resign because his coalition lacked a majority in parliament, and is Japan's fourth prime minister in a year.

"I plan to do my best," said Mr. Murayama in brief remarks shortly after the vote. "Thank you all for your support."

Mr. Murayama's selection provided a temporary respite from the political confusion that has hamstrung Japan's leadership since the LDP lost power.

But it installs a leadership deeply divided.

Since the nine-month term of Japan's last socialist prime minister, Tetsu Katayama, 46 years ago, the main business of the socialists has been to oppose the LDP.

The LDP was pro-

business, the Socialists were pro-labour; the LDP supported the United States, the Socialists sympathised with the Soviet Union.

Outnumbered by the larger LDP, Mr. Murayama's government is unlikely to make major changes in Japan's economic and foreign policies.

It is likely to be brief — Mr. Murayama said before the vote that he planned to dissolve parliament and call general elections.

The LDP normally would be expected to back their party president, Yohei Kono, for prime minister. But on Wednesday, LDP leaders offered to back Mr. Murayama for prime minister in a last-minute bid to lure him to their side.

The race took an unexpected turn late Wednesday when former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu emerged as a leading candidate for Mr. Hata's post, defying the Liberal Democrats' decision to back Mr. Murayama.

Mr. Kaifu's own 1989-91 tenure as prime minister was cutshort by an attempt to push through political reforms not fully backed by his party.

Mr. Hata's eight-bloc coalition subsequently decided it would back Mr. Kaifu as Mr. Hata's successor, and in another surprise announcement, former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone said he also would split from the Liberal Democrats to back Mr. Kaifu for prime minister.

But with 206 seats, the

liberal Democrats are by far the largest party in the lower house. Joined with the Socialists, who hold 74 seats, they had enough sway to win a majority of the 504 ballots cast.

Earlier in the day, the Liberal Democrats rejected a coalition request to extend the parliamentary session to allow more time for talks, forcing the political manoeuvring to its climax.

Mr. Hata remained as a caretaker prime minister until the naming of his successor. But his resignation left the political world in disarray.

The instability has taken its toll on the economy: the U.S. dollar tumbled to a modern record low against the Japanese yen in Tokyo Wednesday after U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said he expected political instability to prevent Tokyo

from making progress in trade talks with the United States.

The dollar ended trading at 99.27 yen Wednesday, the previous low of 99.93 yen was posted in Tokyo Monday.

A stronger yen makes Japanese exports more expensive overseas, hitting manufacturers at a time when the economy is just beginning to limp out of a lengthy slump.

Mr. Hata was obliged to resign to avoid losing a no-confidence vote in parliament after he failed to persuade the socialists, who left his coalition in April, to return to the eight-party alliance.

Until the last minute, the coalition continued to seek a reconciliation with the socialists. But the two groups found themselves at odds over an old sore point — the issue of whether to raise the national sales tax.



A GIFT OF WRITINGS: Austrian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Stiglbauer (L), University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh and other university officials Wednesday review a collection of books presented to the

university library by the Austrian government. Dr. Stiglbauer said the German language books discuss economic, social and political affairs.

'Tractor driver at fault in Irbid accident'

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Traffic Department Wednesday issued a statement regarding the road accident in Irbid Monday, which it said, claimed the lives of 29 people, finding the driver of a tractor at fault, according to Lieutenant Adnan Halasa.

Monday's accident on the Irbid-Amman road involved three vehicles: 2 passenger buses and a tractor. Other sources, including Jordan Television, have reported the death toll at 32 people.

The Lieutenant told the Jordan Times that the tractor driver, was driving slowly in the right lane of the two-lane road heading towards Amman. The Irbid-Amman road is a four-lane highway separated by a concrete divide. The tractor driver, attempting to cross through an in-

tersection in the highway to make a U-turn, began turning left, crossing into the left lane where a passenger bus, driving within the speed limit, was coming forward. The bus driver tried to avoid the tractor, but failed and struck it.

At the same time, another bus was coming from the Amman-Irbid direction and the three vehicles slammed into each other.

The impact caused the complete wreckage of all three vehicles. Passengers' belongings were Wednesday still scattered at the bloody scene.

"The bus driver could not avoid the tractor, and our investigation showed that the sudden lane change of the tractor gave the bus driver no time to brake his vehicle," Lt. Halasa explained. He said that passengers ac-

cused the bus driver of speeding, but police investigations proved that both bus drivers were driving within the speed limit which is set at 120 kilometres per hour (kph) for private cars and 100 kph for buses and other heavy vehicles.

The Jordan Times noted no speed limit signs on the Irbid-Amman road from Amman to the scene of the accident and back to Amman.

Lt. Halasa said that changes in the laws regarding the issuance of tractor driver's licences are needed. He said the road test for driving a tractor is too simple, unlike the other road tests: for other class licences.

Brigadier Ahmad Thmour, director of the Traffic Department, told the Jordan Times that the department plans to take strict measures to prevent such accidents in

the future. "Although we are strict and we punish the violators, we are going to increase our measures in an effort to prevent such tragic accidents from occurring," Brig. Thmour said. The official, however, would not elaborate on the measures to be taken in the near future.

Director of the Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents Mohammad Dabbas said the society has conducted many lectures and talked to people through the media about the importance of road safety, "but it seems that nobody listens," he added.

He told the Jordan Times that two years ago the society had proposed that the Council of Ministers establish a national council on road safety, "but unfortunately the idea was locked up in drawers

and was forgotten by the authorities."

According to Mr. Dabbas, the Traffic Department fines a minimum of 1,000 traffic violators per day.

"Unfortunately, most fines are not paid, because many of the violators have connections who get the fines waived," he said.

"This needs to end because drivers become more careless when they know that if they get a ticket they can get away without paying it," Mr. Dabbas said.

He said the society is planning a march in which children will carry signs addressing motorists saying, "Insure our safety and drive safely." Meanwhile, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Wednesday reported that 28 of the injured left the hospital.

Indian business group to arrive for trade talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A delegation representing the main agricultural and industrial belt of India is due here for a three-day visit beginning Friday for discussions on increased trade.

"The 10-member team from the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be mainly focusing on the Jordanian private sector, said the Indian ambassador to Jordan, A.K. Budhiraja.

Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are among the leading Indian provinces accounting for a sizeable part of the country's agriculture and industry. They are also among the richest.

The three areas also consume huge quantities of fertilizers for agriculture, and, as such, could also, directly and

indirectly, help increase Indian imports of Jordanian fertilizer-related items such as phosphate and potash.

"The main aim of the delegation is increased exports of wheat, rice and other foodstuffs to Jordan, but Indian imports from Jordan could also figure in the discussions," the ambassador told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Budhiraja noted that the delegation was not an official government delegation and the orientation was more towards dealing with the Jordanian private sector.

Most of the delegation members are private businesspersons who own and operate massive industrial and agricultural projects. They will be led by Vineet Varmani, president of the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

They are scheduled to

meet with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. A meeting has been tentatively set with Minister of Industry and Trade, Rima Khalaf.

However, the highlight of the visit will be a meeting with the Jordan Businessmen's Association and one-to-one discussions with Jordanian importers which could produce concrete business deals.

"There has been a very good response from the Jordanian private sector to the visit," said Mr. Budhiraja. "Judging from the requests that we received for one-to-one meetings, many Jordanian businessmen are very much interested in an opportunity to exchange views with Indian counterparts and explore business prospects."

The visit of the delegation

comes at a time when fundamental shifts in Indian import and export policies have led to a sharp decline in India's purchase of Jordanian phosphates and potash; in 1993, India's imports from Jordan totalled JD 65 million compared with nearly JD 130 million in 1991.

Jordanian phosphate and potash companies, already reeling from a deep depression in the international market for raw materials for fertilizer products, have been trying to redress the situation.

But the key lies with the Indian private sector, which is now free to purchase their requirements of these products from the international market. Earlier, the Jordan government had a monopoly in the sector of fertilizer and related items and it also used to subsidize fertilizer processing plants.

Inspection teams to ensure fair, legal water delivery in Mafraq, says minister

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

MAFRAQ — While visiting Mafraq Governorate Wednesday, Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irshaidat said it was regrettable that some area residents continue to illegally obtain extra amounts of water for domestic and irrigation purposes, depriving others of their share.

The minister, who inspected water projects in the desert region and met with community leaders, announced that the ministry was forming inspection teams to tour homes and visit irriga-

tion projects to ensure that water supplies are fairly and legally reaching their destinations.

Dr. Irshaidat told the Jordan Times later that Mafraq Governorate annually produces 35 million cubic metres of water, but it only needs 13 million; the rest, he said, is pumped by the Water Authority to maintain consumption centres in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid.

Still, he said, a considerable amount of water allotted for the governorate is either stolen or lost through the worn out networks.

Referring to water sold by private water trucks, he said

water sold in the major cities is price-controlled, but in the remote regions, including most of Mafraq Governorate, there is no such control.

He added that private water suppliers in Mafraq are not subject to health control measures, but this situation will soon be tackled by the ministry in cooperation with the health authorities.

While in Mafraq, Dr. Irshaidat heard complaints about water shortages from Governor Qahtan Majali, head of the municipality committee Qasem Bani Hani and Parliament member Hayel

Smour. Deputy Smour requested that the ministry allow local residents to drill more artesian wells at the Hammad district to pump sufficient water for their sheep, and Mr. Bani Hani demanded that the ministry replace the 50-year-old worn out water network.

Ministry of Water Secretary General Qusai Qteishat, who accompanied the minister on the tour, told the community meeting that the ministry has already announced a tender to replace the network, and work was expected to start before the end of the year.

Minister tours Zarqa refugee camps

ZARQA (Petra) — Minister of State Mohammad Thweib Wednesday toured Palestinian refugee camps in the Zarqa region and announced a donation of JD49,000 from the Department of Palestinian Affairs to finance development schemes in the camps.

At the camps within Zarqa city, the minister was briefed on health, educational and social services offered to the residents by the Health Department and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Ishaq Shahin, a prominent camp resident, told Mr.

Thweib that the residents were in need of regular water supplies and asphalted roads. He also said the local clinics lack sufficient medical supplies, and cleaning services in the camp were below standard.

Mr. Thweib said the government would pursue efforts to improve services and he paid tribute to UNRWA for its health, educational and social services to camp residents.

Accompanied by Governor Mislak Tarawneh, the minister visited Sukhneh camp northwest of Zarqa and heard complaints from the

local residents about lack of proper mother and child care centres and water and sewerage services.

Addressing a meeting, the minister announced the donation of JD9,000 to help finance part of these projects.

At Hittin camp, Mr. Thweib announced a donation of JD40,000, which he said, would finance part of a project to provide the camp residents with running water and to promote the work of a local youth centre.

Local government and UNRWA officials were present at the meetings.

Teachers start grading tawjihi examinations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ministry of Education teachers today start grading tawjihi examinations of the 78,901 students who sat for the tests.

According to Abdul Rahman Shubeilat, head of the ministry's Examination Department, the examination papers will be graded at two centres in Amman and Irbid. The tawjihi students Wednesday completed their 10-day examination session in the scientific, literary, commercial, industrial, nursing and hotel management fields.

A report in the local press Wednesday said that proctors in Amman governorate discovered a university student taking the English test for a tawjihi student. Police detained the male university student.

According to Mr. Shubeilat, the ministry placed 10,000 teachers as proctors and 4,674 teachers to grade the examinations. The grading process is expected to take two weeks to complete.

The June examination was the second and final session for the Tawjihi students.

Parties plan drive to end Iraq sanctions

AMMAN (AP) — Political parties here plan to lobby friendly countries for an end to the international sanctions against Iraq.

Hamzeh Mansour, spokesman for a special alliance of 11 parties set up for the cause, Wednesday said that party envoys will be visiting Arab, Muslim and European countries ahead of the U.N. Security Council's two-monthly review in mid-July on the sweeping trade embargo against Iraq. The embargo was imposed after Iraq's Au-

gust 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The alliance includes mostly religious-based and leftist parties including the pro-Iraq Jordanian Socialist Arab Baath Party and the Islamic Action Front, which Mr. Mansour represents. Also included are at least two centrist parties.

"We will mobilise all available means, including sending messages and envoys to the concerned governments, meeting with foreign ambassadors in Amman and releas-

ing pamphlets to secure an end to the sanctions," said Mr. Mansour, a member of Parliament.

Deputy Mansour's remarks to the Associated Press came after he met with a visiting delegation from Iraq's ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party.

The Iraqi delegation includes Abdul Ghani Abdul Ghafour, member of the Regional Command of the party, and former government ministers Saad Qassem Hamoudi and Abdul Razaq Hashemi.

Canadian-Jordanian trade to double by year end — envoy

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Canadian-Jordanian trade will double by the end of 1994 from an intensification of development cooperation and bilateral agreements, according to Canada's Ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson.

"Our exports to Jordan did not exceed \$10 million until last year, but are expected to go up to \$18 million this year," Ambassador Robinson told the Jordan Times in an interview this week.

Although Canada's priority in the Middle East is to support the on-going peace process, trade relations are expected to improve as peace becomes a reality, Mr. Robinson said. Jordan's major exports, potash, phosphates and cement, are not attractive to Canada mainly because of the availability of these raw materials at lower cost from other sources, but Mr. Robinson believes that an "invisible potential for

export trade is in the tourism sector."

"There are already direct Royal Jordanian flights to and from Toronto and Montreal and holy land tourism has big potential." In addition, the peace process will greatly affect an increase in this sector, the ambassador said.

Jordanian agricultural produce, especially seasonal produce unavailable in Canada during the cold winter months, could be a major source of export for Jordan, said the ambassador.

"Because we are talking mainly about agricultural produce, this will require high degree of organisation and will partly be dependent on transport costs," he added.

Canada-Jordan trade has increased since the founding of the Canada-Jordan Business Council and since several Canadian trade delegations visited Jordan earlier this year.

A Jordanian trade delegation is currently visiting Canada, in part, to prepare

for more joint ventures in the private sector.

One major joint venture already under way is a processed foods venture which utilises Canadian technology and Jordanian agricultural produce.

Other joint ventures in the fields of communications and manufacturing are "in the making."

Canada, a country with a largely industrial economy, is a producer of cars, road machinery, communications technology and medical equipment.

Although Jordan and Canada do not yet have a most favoured nation (MFN) trading status, Canada supports Jordan's application to join GATT. As a member of the GATT, such a MFN agreement would be plausible.

According to Mr. Robinson, Canada's relations with Jordan have been "excellent" at the "highest levels" largely because of the admiration that the successive Canadian governments have had for the

leadership of Jordan and the Kingdom's support for the peace process.

View on peace process

Although Canada was not directly involved in the Madrid-launched Middle East peace talks, its direct involvement began when the multilateral talks were inaugurated in Moscow in January 1992.

Canada heads the multilateral working group on refugees. Five refugee group meetings have taken place to date, two in Ottawa, one in Oslo and subsequent meetings in Tunis and Cairo.

"The primary concern of the refugee working group is to address the situation of the refugees not to discuss the fundamental questions about their status," said Mr. Robinson.

Ambassador Robinson explained that the "multilateral talks are supposed to be helpful to the success of the bilateral talks."

"The fundamental issue

of status is to be resolved in the bilateral talks," he said.

Asked to predict the outcome of the refugee talks which involve the fate of up to 2.4 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied territories, Mr. Robinson said, "I don't think it is wise to speculate about outcome since conditions are changing all the time."

The refugee issue has been left for the second and third stages in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel bilateral talks.

Canada is also active in other multilateral talks including the talks on water, environment, regional security, as well as the economic talks.

Ambassador Robinson concluded by saying that he felt that the peace process is "right" for all countries in the region, because it will "improve the political, social and economic prospects for the people of the area."

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Thought where politics fails

THE DREAM of a united Arab Nation is, at best, blurred in the vision of even those who have harboured it for decades. Fifty years of building individual nation states and fortifying borders have contributed to making the ideal an unattainable goal for now. Even in the 1950s, at the height of Arab nationalism, some emerging regimes, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, had fought tooth and nail against any Arab merger. Today's tragic experience in Yemen is a living testimony to deep-felt hostility among Arabs to a notion that they have always proclaimed to cherish.

Recognising early on that direct and immediate mergers were anathema to the Arab body politic, well-wishing Arabs pushed for much less than unity; the focus of those efforts had to be building pan-Arab institutes. Thus the Arab League and a dozen Arab League-affiliated bodies were created to ensure a minimum common denominator stand on foreign policy on economic, social and educational integration. However, the league and all the other Arab organisations failed the test of time.

Still some Arabs would not give up, despite the overwhelming odds.

Groups of Arab intellectuals have in the past two decades taken independent paths from their governments. Propelled by the belief that the aspired-to unity cannot come from the top, those intellectuals, coming from all corners of the Arab World, have started a number of institutions that aim at identifying the areas of Arab agreements and differences and compiling data and reaching conclusions as to how work should proceed from here.

Such two institutions are the Beirut-based Centre for Arab Unity Studies and the Amman-based Arab Thought Forum, which is headed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Both institutions have prominent members from all Arab countries including the oil-rich Gulf states. Those two and like-minded institutions are serving as the last frontiers of the Arab dream for unity. The Beirut centre held its annual meeting in the Lebanese capital only several weeks ago; and the Arab Thought Forum is currently holding its annual meet in Rabat.

Both institutions have long realised that only through democracy, respect for human rights and respect for freedoms could Arabs realise their hope of unity and progress.

It would indeed be heartening to see more Arab intellectuals join those institutions or at least support their endeavours and goals. The Arab media in particular can play an important role in promoting the noble objectives of those people. After all, those institutions, as Crown Prince Hassan rightly said in an address to the Rabat meeting, are the last strongholds of Arab unity and the seeds for a future based on equality, liberty and unity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily said that the United States seems to be doubtful about its foreign policies, particularly the so-called new world order which was an invention of the former U.S. President George Bush. Washington's reluctance to respond to a Saudi and European call for sending U.N. observers to Yemen clearly reflects America's belief that burdening the United States with more tasks, in addition to those of Somalia, Afghanistan and Georgia, was counterproductive and costly, said Tareq Masarweh. The writer said that Washington is doubtful about the new world order and has no clear policy for implementing it; therefore, it is not willing to embark on any adventures in Haiti, Yemen and Bosnia as it realises that its successes achieved in the campaign against Iraq could not be repeated in any other part of the world. For this reason, said the writer, Washington is of the view that the Yemeni issue could be settled through mediation by the regional countries, through a regional plan.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i cautioned those who support the self-rule in parts of Palestine, in implementation of the Oslo deal, not to be overenthusiastic or expect more than what is reasonable at the moment. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the struggle for complete rights and full independence is long and hard and takes a long time to achieve results, noting that since the beginning, the Palestinians realised that the Oslo accord does not meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinian people's demands. The writer said also that those who oppose the self-rule as a first step towards the attainment of full rights should realise that the Palestinians have not abandoned their struggle for independence, noting that the struggle was continuing in a different form.

The View From Academia

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

The U.S. relationship with the Arab Nation in light of Arab and Muslim conceptions

IT GOES without saying that any efforts to improve the U.S. relation with the Arab World at this critical stage in the history of our region (and the same applies more or less to Euro-Arab relations) must inevitably take into consideration the position of the Arab man in the street. Recently, some significantly positive modifications and shifts have occurred, but America's overall image, as perceived by most people in the Arab Nation, is still far from satisfactory.

The image is no doubt complex. On the one hand, there is a substantial degree of genuine interest, attraction, fascination and admiration of the U.S. culture both by those who know more about it and those who know less. Generally, Arabs are appreciative not only of American music, fiction, TV shows, clothes, food and sports but also of geography, history, system of government, technology and some social habits and modes of behaviour — more so than of many other contemporary global cultures, both Western and Eastern. Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Jesse Jackson are not only household names throughout Arab societies but also admirable men in their own right. The American revolution is frequently cited, and very favourably, in modern Arab discourse about liberty and freedom.

On the other hand, there is a great deal of scepticism, suspicion, disbelief, resistance, fear and even hostility. To many in the Arab World, including those who eat Kentucky fried chicken, listen to blue grass and jazz, drive Ford cars, love "coach" and the Bill Cosby shows, and treasure U.S. slogans about human rights and democracy, the U.S. culture or civilisation is nonetheless a source of real concern, discomfort and danger.

The "danger" is conceived in two inter-related ways. First, America is portrayed as a diametrically opposed culture. In Arab society, people from various walks of life view the U.S. as not just remarkably different, in the ideals it cherishes and the practices it promotes, but the exact antithesis of what "we" accept as the norm. For many of them, it is a largely "peculiar" culture, hopelessly irreconcilable with ours. While admitting that America is technologically, industrially, economically and militarily superior, they insist that it is spiritually and morally inferior. It is "crazy," "queer," "alien," "materialistic," "capitalistic," "selfish," "corrupt" and "evil." Its cities are full of crime, drugs, and perverse practices. Any contact with it is certainly contagious.

Secondly, the U.S. poses a direct threat, the argument goes, to our society's Arabic and Islamic identity. A vast majority of people in the Arab World believe that the U.S. is deliberately and continually seeking, overtly and covertly, to control, dominate, distort, undermine, sabotage and eventually destroy all that is "Arab" and "Islamic" in our culture. Most feel that there can never be a healthy

relationship, culturally, politically, economically, or otherwise, between us and "it," for its real intention is not only to rob us of our wealth, manipulate us and use us as foolish consumers of its commodities but also, more importantly, to alienate us from our national ideals, indigenous entity and the Islamic faith. In short, it is the "enemy."

The causes of such conception or misconception are manifold. It is due, in part, to the years of deprivation and suffering the Arab Nation spent under European colonisation throughout the first half of the present century, whose painful memories and hard lessons we cannot easily forget. It can also be attributed to Arab familiarity with and response to the long tradition of Western (American and European) Orientalism whose vision and representation of the Arab/Islamic East (see Edward Said has perceptively pointed out) are remarkably distortive, reductive and antagonistic. In addition, it is an unavoidable outcome of our exposure to American TV series. Hollywood, and media. Furthermore, it is a natural result of America's own measures and acts in the Middle East: its once blind support for Israel (financially, militarily, through the infamous U.N. vetoes, propaganda in the press and media); its once dismissive attitude regarding Palestinian and Arab rights; the Gulf war; etc. Let's remember in this context that "Zionism" and American "imperialism" have been, and still are, almost synonymous in the minds of many Arab citizens. Moreover, it also springs, admittedly, from some ignorance on our part of the American culture itself. Not all those who write or speak about the U.S. in the Arab World are well-acquainted with it.

As for the first level of "danger," it does not bother me much. I do not mean that it is not important. No. What I mean, rather, is that it is part and parcel of reality in this world. Human societies anytime and anywhere are inherently prejudiced against each other. It is an unfortunate fact of life that cultures cannot define themselves, it seems, except in competition against each other. Hence the dismissiveness, the slurs, the distortion, the misrepresentation, and the animosity — for the competition is often unhealthy and nasty. Germany feels superior to France, France to Britain, Britain to America, America to the Arab World, the Arab World to the West, the West to the East, and so on — a vicious circle. Such prejudice can be visibly detected even inside those individual communities themselves. The Bostonians in the U.S. laugh at the Californians; in Great Britain, the English at the Scots; in Jordan, the Ammanis at the Tafelins. Facts of life, at times "cute" and "funny" at times upsetting and disastrous.

We all, in the U.S. and here, bear a responsibility regarding the creation of more effective channels of cross-cultural communication and better understanding. In this respect, we look forward to the noble efforts of our enlightened sociologists, anthropologists, academics, writ-

ters, diplomats, educational institutions, exchange programmes of all sorts, tourists, etc. I hope they will succeed one day to bring us closer together, to lessen our biases and prejudices, and to sift facts from fiction. But this, I am afraid, is a life-time job; the wheel of history often takes its time in turning.

The second level of "danger," which is more immediately worrying, is easier to rectify and remedy. Here the ball is in the U.S. court. Specific steps and concrete measures have to be taken to convince the Arab citizens that the U.S. has to come and in the aftermath of the post-cold war era when it is the only superpower in the field, is not as colonialist and imperialist as the European powers were not long ago. It is, of course, up to the U.S. to choose which course it wants to take, in the first place: the humanistic or the hegemonic and occupationist. I hope it is the former. Actions speak louder than words. The point is to stress here that there is nothing to prevent the U.S. and the Arab World, during and beyond the peace-making era, from establishing a relationship based on mutual trust, mutual cooperation, mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual pursuit of prosperity and happiness. We have great resources and some expertise: the U.S. has the technology. It needs us, we need it. One thing, however, is untouchable and absolutely sacred for the Arab citizen: his/her Arab-Islamic identity. With regard to almost everything else, they are open-minded, flexible and remarkably commonsensical.

One is encouraged by several gestures on part of the current U.S. administration in its approach to the Arab World: a) Its genuine support of the PLO-Israeli autonomy deal, enthusiasm for a Jordanian-Israeli agreement, and apparently sincere attempt to revitalise negotiations on the other tracks; b) President Bill Clinton's warm message of congratulations to Muslims inside the U.S. and throughout the world on the eve of Eid Al Fitr; c) and Vice President Al Gore's tactful visit to the Islamic Centre in Washington D.C. on the occasion of the Islamic New Year, a visit which has left a very positive impact on Muslims in America and outside it.

We need more gestures like this to assure us that the U.S. is well-meaning and fair and that it can be a trustworthy partner in the new Middle East, which we are all anxiously anticipating. Gestures like a firmer stand on Arab East Jerusalem and a tougher position on the illegal Israeli settlements. Arabs and Muslims can and do exercise their rights as Arabs and Muslims on most U.S. campuses; they form Arab clubs with generous support from American universities, and they worship on Friday in peace. They need to be assured that they can be themselves and worship freely in their own home countries, that a relationship with the U.S. is not at the expense of their own identity.

M. KAHIL



Old foes put history aside in new coalition

By Michael Shields

Reuters

BUDAPEST — As a young prisoner serving a life sentence for joining Hungary's bloody 1956 uprising against Communist rule, Imre Mecs never imagined himself becoming a liberal member of parliament.

As a young man serving in the "padded coat" militia helping mop up resistance after Soviet might crushed the revolt, Gyula Horn never dreamed he would become prime minister of a democratic, capitalist Hungary four decades hence.

But now these two figures from the opposite sides of the 1956 barricades will be sharing power.

Mr. Horn's Socialists, led by many ex-Communist reformers, and Mr. Mecs's alliance of free democrats, grouping many former dissidents who championed democracy under the old regime, are joining forces.

Their coalition government represents a watershed in Hungarian history and a symbolic reconciliation that they hope to extend to often polarised

compatriots.

Mr. Mecs, who became a leading opposition figure after a general amnesty in 1963, took up arms nearly 40 years ago to try to break Soviet Communism's grip on Hungary.

Now he is on the same side as Horn, whose political evolution from Communist to Social Democrat has restored him to power after a brief hiatus of conservative rule.

Mr. Horn may have once been an enemy, but reformers like him who came to control and reshape the Communist Party in late 1980s Hungary have to get credit for what they accomplished, Mr. Mecs said.

"They dismantled the one-party state, they dismantled the iron curtain and Gyula Horn played a significant role in this," Mr. Mecs told Reuters in an interview.

"We both fought in 1956. He had a gun and I had a gun. We both believed we were fighting for a just cause, but I think history has shown that we (rebels) were on the right side."

In a gesture laden with

political significance, Mr. Horn and Erzsébet Nagy, daughter of Imre Nagy, the premier at the time of the uprising who was later executed for his role, stood side by side to lay a wreath this month to the victims of 1956.

Mr. Horn, who says he only guarded bridges and other key installations while a member of the militia, called the wreath-laying ceremony an act of reconciliation.

"We need reconciliation between people who stood on different sides in 1956," he told reporters.

"There were victims, and there were victims on both sides. We need reconciliation between political opponents because without it, we cannot lead this country out of the crisis it is in now," said Mr. Horn, who will lead the incoming government.

The bridge-building process began when reform Communists and opposition figures negotiated free elections in 1990 that ushered a centre-right government. The Socialists and Free Democratic became opposi-

tion parties in parliament.

After routing conservatives in elections last month, the two parties agreed under immense public pressure to unite and govern together, despite an absolute Socialist majority in parliament. The decision will yoke together politicians whose lives have taken markedly different courses.

"Emotions are still very strong," AFD chairman Ivan Peto mused in an interview. "The question is how much reason is capable of pushing emotions into the background."

Mr. Peto recalled that Hungary's leaders entered into a grand compromise with society after the 1956 revolution in a system that came to be known as "Goulash Communism," a much softer version of headline rule in other east bloc states.

Hungarians' standard of living would rise gradually and the political system would not interfere in people's private lives, but in return people could not question the leadership's legitimacy, Hungarian-

Soviet relations or the leading role of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party.

"Finally this system was very destructive. The end result was that, from the mid-1980s on, no one with the exception of (Communist leader) Janos Kadar believed in the system," Mr. Peto said. "Nobody maintained the system because they believed it was a good one, but only because the Soviet Union wanted it. It was no secret, even among the highest political circles."

People had to choose whether to work within the political framework or to become dissidents and risk losing their jobs, jeopardising their futures and going to jail.

Mr. Peto chose the middle road, working as an archivist and publishing tracts in underground literature under a pen name, but making no secret of his antipathy to the Communist regime.

Another prominent AFD figure, Janos Kis, was blacklisted and had to live on freelance translation work for 17 years.

Laszlo Bekesi, the Socialist's past and future finance minister, chose to join the system and try to change it.

"For many people the only relevant solution seemed to have been to reform the system from within because even in 1988 it was hard to foresee the Soviet Union would collapse and the whole system would collapse with it," he said recently.

"The decisive part of the intelligentsia and experts almost unanimously had the opinion they had to push reforms as far as the limits of the system. There was really no other choice."

"Most of those people don't regret for a second having joined the party and having gone through this process. I can say this with certainty," he said.

Now the question is how well these disparate forces can function as a team.

"This is not going to be a love affair. This is going to be a marriage of convenience," Socialist Deputy Chairman Imre Szekeres said earlier this month. "I only hope we won't have an early divorce."

مجلس من الدول

A changing White House

By Laurence McQuillan
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The man who entered the White House promising to usher in change is changing his White House in what is likely to be only the first phase of an overhaul.

In his 18 months as president, criticism has swirled around Bill Clinton — from the functioning of his White House operation to the handling of his foreign policy.

Mr. Clinton's decision Monday to change his top White House advisers could very well be the first step in a series of moves aimed at overhauling the tone and organisation of his administration.

"I have the opportunity to help direct the office of the presidency and to try to make it serve the president in an effective and efficient manner," said Leon Panetta, named Monday as Mr. Clinton's new White House chief of staff.

"It will not be easy," said Mr. Panetta. "Changes will be made in consultation with the president, but they will be made in the spirit of making the best use of the talent and abilities that are here."

Every new president takes time to get acclimated to his job, but for Mr. Clinton the task seems to have taken longer than for most — although a shakeup mid-way into a first term is by no means new.

What is unique to Mr. Clinton, however, is the clear sense that folks in his White House are still trying to get organised, still trying to get a handle on how Washington works.

Mr. Clinton named Mr. Panetta, his budget director, the new White House chief of staff, replacing childhood friend Thomas "Mac" McLarty. He then chose Office of Manage-

ment and Budget Deputy Director Alice Rivlin to replace Mr. Panetta.

The president also said he was shifting the duties of special White House counsellor David Gergen to have him focus more on international issues until the end of the year when Mr. Gergen has said he would like to leave government.

Mr. McLarty, who grew up with Mr. Clinton in Tiny Hope, Arkansas, was named a special counsellor to the president with duties ranging from lobbying Congress to setting up major international conferences.

Mr. Clinton, talking about the issues he faces in the days ahead, said that in order "to meet those challenges... we must use our people as wisely as possible, matching their talents to their responsibilities."

It is not clear just where the next changes will be. Mr. Panetta's mandate applies strictly to the White House operation itself, but other aspects of the administration have been highly criticised as well.

Foreign policy has been a major problem area for Mr. Clinton, with rumours long circulating about the future of Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Christopher, at the centre of the controversy over Mr. Clinton's handling of foreign policy, welcomed the shifting of Mr. Gergen to a foreign policy role.

Mr. Gergen, named a year ago as counsellor to the president to help Mr. Clinton extract himself from early problems in his presidency, has been preparing to move to the private sector.

He agreed, however, to stay with the administration through the end of the year — setting up an office at the State Department, and keeping one at the White House.

Sun, soccer and near-starvation in a Haiti slum

By Lisa M. Hamm
The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Ten thin boys play an intense game of soccer, dodging, kicking, laughing, panting. "Goal!" they howl with joy when their team scores.

Now look closer. Only two have shoes. Their clothes are in tatters, already used when they came from a foreign charity and worn since by numerous older brothers and sisters. The ball is scraps of foam rubber tied tightly together, only approximately round.

The field? It's a slab of cement where an aluminum shack once stood, one of more than 800 destroyed in a fire that swept part of the sprawling slum called Cite Soleil six months ago. The site is now a vast expanse of rocks, rusted metal, broken glass and fly-infested piles of garbage.

Cite Soleil means Sun City, and it's a worthy name: The Sun beats down relentlessly on windowless aluminum shacks, separated by narrow dirt alleys, that house about 25,000 people.

Political crises come and go in Haiti, but life in places like Cite Soleil never changes.

Makelo Marcelin, 8, will walk home from the soccer game at sundown to a one-room shack slightly larger than a jail cell shared by his parents and their seven children.

He ate just one meal on this day — a thin soup made of bread, oil and water that his mother cooked over a small charcoal fire late in the afternoon.

After dark, there is nothing to do but sleep. The single lightbulb in the shack sometimes works if you rig two wires together, but the family has no books to read or TV to watch.

Makelo has no home-



U.S. military personnel escort Haitians aboard a U.S. military plane bound for the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. The group of six Haitians have passed the preliminary interview on the

USN Comfort, a hospital ship where refugee interviews are being held (AFP photo)

work because there has been no money for school fees since the tourists stopped coming and his father Jean's income as a guide vanished.

Most of the children will lie on a cotton sheet on the dirt floor of the airless 2.4-by-3-metre shack, but Makelo's parents will take at least one into the lumpy double bed. His two oldest brothers shared a narrow bunk until one of its thin aluminum legs snapped.

After bedtime, the coughing begins.

Jean, 49, has severe attacks of asthma every night. Madeleine, his wife, props her husband's frail, shaking body up on pillows as he heaves and hacks uncontrollably.

"Because he's suffering, we cannot sleep," said Madeleine a thin, serious

woman of 38. "It's worse when there's a full moon." "I cannot buy the medicine I need," Jean said wearily. "I have no money."

When it rains, which it does in torrents for half of the year, water pours through cardboard patches that cover holes in the walls and roof.

"It floods," Madeleine said.

During a hard rain, Jean puts the youngest two children, 4-year-old Gary and Margaret, 18 months, up on a tiny wooden table to sleep and sits beside them so they won't fall.

Madeleine pulls a bucket onto the bed to catch the water gushing through the roof and the family huddles together until the storm passes.

The floor has been built

up with flat rocks so the water will drain out the door. Sometimes it works, but not in a hard rain.

In the morning, the sun is back. The Marcelins wake early, hang sheets and clothing on ropes to dry, then go to a community toilet a few minutes' walk away that is open only in daylight.

When it doesn't rain, 19-year-old Madiana stands in line to buy about 20 liters of water, carrying it home in a wide red basin balanced on her head. The water must serve the whole family for drinking, cooking and washing.

In a clearing outside the house, Madiana crouches over a small bucket, holds her purple tunic in front of her breasts and soaps herself, calmly meeting the eyes of passersby.

After bathing, she dresses in a corner of the room while her brother Kims, 20, tinkers with a toy truck he made for Gary from metal cans that held donated food. On the hood, it says USAID. The wheels are made from old sandals.

Each day, Jean walks several kilometres to an art museum hoping to find foreigners he can refer to a craftsman of Haitian art, earning a commission. But few foreigners come around these days, so he usually brings home just a few coins from begging.

Kims also creates wall decorations by cutting intricate designs into sheet metal with a hammer and chisel, then painting the finished product.

"Sometimes my father finds people to buy them,"

he said. Shortly before sunset, Jean heads for the market to get food for the next day's meal. Flies crawl on open baskets of grain, seeds and vegetables. Jean picks out two green breadfruit and buys some rice.

Roosters run around, dogs bark, people push and shove. Putrid smoke from burning garbage clings to clothing.

The children don't seem to notice. Boys kick a "soccer ball." A girl in a white kerchief jumps "rope," a twisted strand of rubber cut from a tire.

Two youngsters play makeshift flutes, one fashioned from an old vacuum cleaner hose, the other from a plastic pipe.

If they lived in another place, there might be music lessons. Not in Sun City.

Naples cleans up for G-7 summit

By Paul Holmes
Reuters

NAPLES — Some tourist guides advise visitors to Naples to dress simply and keep a low profile in certain parts of the city to avoid the attentions of pickpockets and bag snatchers on motor scooters.

The leaders of the world's richest nations will face no such threats when they fly in for the weekend next month for a Group of Seven (G-7) summit in the southern Italian port, one of the world's most chaotic and colourful cities.

A 4,000-strong security force will be on hand to protect the world's mighty, who will meet from July 8 to 10 in the city built in the shadow of the volcano Vesuvius.

Police and soldiers will seal off a wide area around the 17th century royal palace where the heads of state and government will hold their talks and the hotels where they will stay overlooking the spectacular Bay of Naples.

"We are preparing for every eventuality but have no reason to believe anything is going to happen," Umberto Impropita, the Naples prefect and the man in charge of security, told Reuters.

Naples, one of Europe's most densely populated cities, is plagued by high unemployment, urban decay, pollution and the scourge of the camorra — the neighbourhood crime gangs that are the city's

version of the Sicilian mafia.

It is also virtually insolvent after decades of corrupt administration that pumped billions of dollars meant for development into illegal political party financing and the coffers of the camorra.

"The Naples council is not able to spend more than it has in the cashbox and it has practically nothing in the cashbox," said Antonio Bassolino, the city's left-wing mayor.

The summit will bring together the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, who will be joined by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors.

Mr. Bassolino, elected last year on a pledge to stop the Naples rot, hopes the gathering will be the start of renewal for the city and its 1.2 million inhabitants.

"Some people may have thought it would be impossible for Naples to prepare for a G-7 summit and organise it properly. But the opposite is the case," said Mr. Bassolino.

"For all of us, this event marks an act of rebirth. It means the world will rediscover Naples. It is a challenge we are winning and one we want to and must win."

He says Neapolitans are eager to show that their city, home to an abundance of culture stretching from ancient Greek and Roman treasures to rich renaissance

and 17th century art, is more than just the cliches of anarchy and violence.

A 50 billion lire (\$30 million) government grant has given a face-lift to the royal palace, home to the Bourbon kings who made Naples the capital of their 18th century kingdom of the two Sicilies, and to several other landmarks in the summit area.

Roads around the site are being retarred or recobbled.

As part of the clean-up, the city has even budgeted to remove and crush up to 1,000 abandoned cars, wrecks that testify to the dodginess ride that is driving in Naples.

"There should be a G-7 every day," said one taxi driver approvingly as he steered through streets still being resurfaced ahead of the summit.

His right hand remained on the gearstick throughout the ride, subtly hiding the meter display which he had failed to reset from his last fare — a common trick among the city's cab drivers to bump up the price.

Former prime minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi chose Naples as the site for the summit last year because he believed both its problems, including unemployment more than double the national average of 11.3 per cent, and its cultural and historic importance deserved to be highlighted.

It will give new Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, a billionaire media tycoon from Italy's affluent and orderly north, his first chance to play host to a major international gathering since he was elected in March.

Souvenir-sellers, restaurant owners and hoteliers are all hoping for a boom from the anticipated 3,500 journalists who will stay in Naples and the nearby resort of Sorrento.

One restaurant in the city that gave the world pizza has even created a version to mark the summit, which at 12,000 lire (\$7) is about twice the price of the simple pizza margherita.

Ingredients of the "pizza G-7" include tomato, mozzarella cheese and basil for Italy, sausage for Germany, potato chips for the United States and Canada, bacon for Britain, prawns for Japan and cheese for the French.

"The (G-7) leaders are welcome to come along and try it but I suppose they won't be able to because of security," said Luigi Lombardi, a fourth generation pizza maker.

But not everyone in Naples is happy about the summit.

Neofascist parliamentarian Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of wartime dictator Benito Mussolini and a niece of Naples' most famous actress Sophia Loren, has said the money spent sprucing up the city would be better spent elsewhere.

"Before doing all this work to make things look nice they should resolve the problems of the city, first of all for the people who haven't got a job," Ms. Mussolini said recently.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Cava, a town whose palace will be used for a summit banquet, has accused police of trying to hound illegal immigrants out of Naples area so G-7 leaders will not have to see them.

"The big seven who are coming our way know all about power and wealth and they have neither the eyes to see the poor nor the hearts to put up with them," Bishop Raffaele Nogaro told the magazine Famiglia Cristiana.

Neapolitan singers are also up in arms. They say both they and ordinary Neapolitans are being excluded from a summit-related cultural programme and intend to beat out Naples' classics for free on pizzas.

"I've been all around the world singing songs that stand for Naples and they're telling me I can't sing 'ciao mio' in my own city," said the singers' leader 70-year-old Aurelio Fierro.

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U.S. remains world's top debtor

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Foreign holdings in the United States grew more than U.S. holdings abroad in 1993, with a \$555.7 billion gap keeping the United States the world's leading debtor nation, the Commerce Department said Tuesday.

The figure, seen in the light of recent dollar devaluations, demonstrates a growing influence of foreigners in the U.S. economy, analysts said.

The figure marks a 9.4 per cent increase from the revised 1992 level of \$507.94 billion.

"We have lost control of our currency and our credit markets to foreigners and speculators," Lawrence Chimere, chief economist at the Economic Strategy Institute, a Washington think tank, said.

"If you keep running huge trade deficits at a time when no one wants to hold dollars, then you are going to put pressure on your currency," he added.

The total net debt figure represents the amount that would have to be produced if foreigners decided to cash in all of their U.S. holdings. It is not truly a debt.

The figure includes ownership of corporations, loans, stocks, bonds, and real estate among other categories.

Total 1993 U.S. holdings abroad reached \$2,370 trillion, an increase of \$220.84 billion. Total foreign holdings in the United States reached \$2,926 trillion, an increase of \$268.6 billion.

The last time the United States was considered a net creditor country was 1986, when the country's total overseas investments outstripped foreign investments in the United States by \$34.6 billion.

1987 marked the first year since World War I that the United States became a net debtor nation.

Increased imports to the United States fuelled the fall from creditor to debtor nation. As a result, the United States became more vulnerable to foreigners liquidating their investments.

"The dollar is periodically vulnerable to these kinds of selling waves because the United States requires a continuous inflow of foreign investment to offset its appetite for imports," economist Bruce Stein, with Merrill Lynch in New York, said.

The Japanese remained the largest holder of direct U.S. investments, but their total of \$96.21 billion for 1993 showed a 1.4 per cent drop from 1992.

Stocks hold gains as dollar plummets below 99 yen

LONDON (Agencies) — Stock markets clung to their hard-fought gains Wednesday in defiance of a fall in the dollar to a new post-1945 war low against the Japanese yen.

The U.S. currency fell below 99 yen in a continuation of the slide which started in Asian trading after U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said Japanese political turmoil was slowing progress in U.S.-Japan trade talks.

Dealers said central banks may intervene at any time to support the dollar but others saw the Group of Seven (G-7) major industrial nations switching instead to coordinating their interest rate policy at their meeting in Naples on July 8-10.

Many analysts said the dollar's value could not be maintained without credit-tightening by the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) and easing by the Bundesbank and possibly the Bank of Japan.

"We might see the central banks come in but I sort of think they are trying as much as possible to stay out of the market," said Steve Barrow, an economist at Chemical Bank in London.

"The overriding concern of the G-7 is to avoid a meeting where they seem to be under pressure ... they can avoid it by not panicking," he added.

At least 17 central banks intervened last Friday to back the dollar but this huge intervention, costing at least \$3 billion, did nothing to halt the currency's slide.

The dollar is falling mainly due to Japan's huge trade surplus with the United States and the failure of the G-7 to show its commitment to supporting the U.S. currency.

A lower dollar is usually bad news for stocks as dealers fear it could slow economic growth in the export-led economies of Japan and Germany as well as prompting

the U.S. Federal Reserve to raise interest rates to defend the greenback.

Again stock markets ended lower on these fears but European shares rose in thin trading supported by firmer stock futures contracts and bond prices.

"It is quite impressive that we've managed to claw ahead in the U.K.," said Robert Buckland, strategist at Natwest Bank.

But he added: "We are worrying about the dollar." Wall Street opened higher after the release of revised U.S. gross domestic product figures for the first quarter of this year.

These showed the U.S. economy expanded at a 3.4 per cent annual rate instead of the three per cent estimated a month ago.

The Dow Jones industrial average was trading 13.27 points higher at 3,683.56 at 1350 GMT after falling Tuesday.

Earlier, European stocks were pushed higher by news that the German Bundesbank had shaved its securities repurchase rate, a key money-market rate, by four basis points to 4.96 per cent.

Stock dealers attributed much of Wednesday's early rise in European share prices to technical factors.

Investment funds in Germany were bumping up prices by the accounting deadline at the end of June to improve their second-quarter performance record, dealers said.

In Paris, traders said the market was also nervously watching the dollar.

Investors were divided whether the Bank of France would cut its intervention rate on Thursday, which discouraged the taking of new positions.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, in his strongest remarks to date on the sagging dollar, has in-

sisted that the U.S. administration opposed weakening the greenback as a means of boosting exports.

"We believe a stronger dollar is better for our economy and better for the world's economy," Mr. Bentsen said.

"I know there are people who think we have some strategy in Washington of driving down the dollar or using the dollar as some kind of bargaining chip," he said.

"Let me say clearly — and I speak for the entire administration — this is not the case. The dollar is not a tool of our trade policy."

Foreign exchange markets have doubted the resolve of President Bill Clinton's administration to defend the dollar, some believing that Washington secretly favours a weak dollar to put pressure on Japan to reduce its trade surplus.

Mr. Bentsen said Washington hoped to promote greater U.S. exports by expanding trade and encouraging growth in the world economy, "not by devaluing our currency."

The latest decline of the dollar to post-war low points against the Japanese currency is prompting international borrowers to move away from Eurodollar bond issues in favour of offerings denominated in yen.

Since the beginning of the week, three new European issues have come to the market with two state borrowers from Germany and Australia, and Xerox Corp. of the United States, raising a combined \$2.5 billion yen (\$525 million).

An official in the Euro-bond section of U.S. investment bank Merrill Lynch, lead manager of two of the three issues, said demand for Euroyen issues would keep growing if Japan and the United States failed to reach a trade accord.

Saudi economy remains chocked despite a breeze from rising oil price

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia is breathing easier thanks to a \$5 a barrel surge in oil prices but analysts say the economic problems of the world's largest producer are far from over.

Despite the 45 per cent price rise over the last three months, Saudi Arabia's oil revenues so far are well below last year, the economy is shrinking and the government remains far behind on payments to its contractors.

Furthermore the government has not undertaken many of the lasting reforms that economists say will enable it to deal with the lower revenues likely to result from sanctions-tied Iraq's eventual return to the oil market.

"The government doesn't have much money. People may feel better," one banker said, "but maybe they're just more resigned."

The price of Arab Light in the first half of this year is averaging more than \$3 a barrel below the price a year earlier. Combined with slightly lower production, that translates into a loss of about \$3 billion in revenue for the first half of 1994.

Arab Light is currently a little above \$16 a barrel. It had crashed from a March 1993 peak of more than \$17.50 in March to under \$11 at the end of the year. Prices remained in the doldrums for the first quarter of this year but have risen sharply since the end of March.

The rise will make it easier for the government to meet its international obligations, including repayments on a \$4.5 billion sovereign loan, and it further reduces speculative pressure on the Saudi riyal.

It also makes it more likely the government will be able to reach its revenue target for the year.

But that target is part of a roughly balanced budget announced for 1994 that includes a cut of 19 or 20 per

cent in government spending — draconian when the government accounts for more than one third of the economy.

"Now they're on a level that they planned for the 1994 budget. That doesn't mean things are easier. We're in a negative growth scenario," one analyst commented.

Businessmen take some comfort in the fact that the government is making some overdue payments to them, but a serious backlog still remains.

"I know companies who haven't been paid for 18 months in the defence sector," a banker said.

Combined with the fact that work is not to start on any major project this year, the payment delays have meant hard times for the contractors, some are sending their foreign workers home.

They have also turned to the banks for bridging finance. But bankers say they have become tighter lenders, having learned the lessons of the 1980s when they overlent and had to swallow tens of millions of dollars of bad debt.

It is not clear whether the government itself, which plays its financial cards close to its chest, will have to come to the market for more finance, bankers say.

But at least one analyst sees the higher prices as a mixed blessing since they alleviate the pressure on the government for serious reform — for example, permanent cuts in costly water and energy subsidies.

"There's a distinction between belt-tightening and reforms that make the system more efficient. They just engaged in belt-tightening," he said, referring to the 1994 budget.

Saudi Arabia's private sector has given its verdict by pulling money out of the

stock market.

The official Saudi share index ended last week at 141.31, down from almost 180 at the end of last year and more than 213 in March 1993.

"It's a sign of investor confidence or lack thereof," an analyst said.

Private investment flows are difficult to track, but analysts suspect some of the money that was in Saudi shares is chasing higher returns in the United States,

Europe and Asia. The eventual return of Iraq to the oil markets — Baghdad has been under a U.N. embargo since the 1990-91 Gulf war — hangs over the Saudi economy.

Some analysts believe the close U.S.-Saudi economic and strategic relations may cause Washington to drag its feet at the United Nations to delay Iraqi oil sales as long as possible, possibly beyond 1995.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY JUNE 30, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Midday planetary conditions bring some marked changes in your life from which you will gain some benefit if you accept modern methods and grab new opportunities that are heading in your direction.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to find new interests which can give you added abundance at this time. Be sure to maintain a cheerful manner in any situation.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Carry through with ideas that will bring you more harmony and ideal conditions at your home. Use your ability to organize all of your tasks.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Contact one who can help you get ahead in your line of endeavour. Adopt a more logical outlook on life and be practical in your manners.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Money should not be uppermost on your mind today, instead figure out how to do what you have to do the best which you can provide.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get busy doing what you most want to do and make real headway toward personal and business success. Use care in motion so there is no problems.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make long-range plans which will give added security in the days

ahead. Show closest ties that you are truly devoted to them with loving actions.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day to be with fascinating friends for the recreations which are mutually pleasurable. Take steps to improve your health.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make constructive plans that could give you greater success in business. Do nothing that could harm your good name in any way.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Take advantage of an opportunity to advance in your career and become more prosperous. Be active and cheerful in whatever you pursue.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) Expand your enquiry to expand in business affairs and get good results now. Strive for more harmony with family members and close friends.

AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 19) A good time to make concrete plans, which could bring added income in the future. Take no chances with your reputation if at all possible.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study your environment and make plans to improve it. Come to a better accord with fellow associates. Show that you have poise in your life.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY JULY 1, 1994

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This first day of the month is a difficult end of the work week with the double Moon Square to Uranus and Neptune making emotional relationship difficult and self-deception a strong likelihood.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Morning is the best time to analyse the future and then you can make definite plans to have more abundance for the time in the future when needed.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Confidentially plan how to get more backing from experts so that you can enjoy added income in the days ahead which will be beneficial.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take care of outside duties you have in the morning, and then carry through with personal aims. Be poised to handle and situation which develops.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a good day to look into new outlets and study modern systems which could lead to greater success for you in the future.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study new appliances that could give you greater benefits in the future. Show others that you have wisdom. Be alert to any situation.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be more cogni-

zant of what your associates are doing and coordinate efforts wisely so there is more mutual profits for those involved.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Listen to what an intelligent adviser has to suggest so that you can advance in your career activities. Be kind to those close to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Take time to please friends and gain more goodwill for the days ahead. Be poised at all times today to handle any important situation.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Confer privately with advisers and decide on the right course to follow for the future. Use common sense in your decisions today.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) You are able to gain the favour of a higher-up today, if you go after it sensibly. Be more self-assured in whatever you do today.

AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 19) Getting involved in some new outlet could prove lucrative to you in the days ahead. Be more reassuring to mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study new interests which can bring added benefits in the future. Take no risks with your reputation at this time or there could be trouble.

Creditors reduce 47% of Bulgarian debt

SOFIA (AFP) — Bulgaria Wednesday signed an agreement here amounting to a reduction of about 47 per cent of debts of \$8.1 billion owed to members of the Club of London.

The agreement is valid for 30 years. It states that 12.4 per cent of the principal amount, representing \$954 million, is to be purchased by Bulgaria for 12.1875 cents in the dollar.

Another 27 per cent of the principal will be converted into bonds bearing a reduced rate of interest, and 60.6 per cent into bonds of which the nominal value would be reduced by half.

These figures were provided in a report submitted by Finance Minister Stojan Alexandrov to parliament last week.

Average annual payments until 2000 would be \$250-

\$260 million. Bulgaria is to pay interest on the debt until the end of the century. The principal is to be repaid from 2001.

The initial cost of acquiring the bonds and the payment of interest is set at \$770 million which is to be advanced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the so-called Group of 24 (G-24) countries.

The agreement was signed by the executive director of the Deutsche Bank, Peter Tills, and the director of payments at Citibank of New York, Mrs. Lee Warner. These two banks drafted the agreement.

Twelve big banks signed annexes to the agreement Wednesday. Among these were the Credit Lyonnais, the Societe Generale, the Bank Austria and Bayerische Vereinsbank. Most of the re-

maining 300 creditor banks were to sign within a month.

The Bulgarian parliament must ratify the agreement and Bulgaria must begin to make payments towards the end of July, Mr. Tills said.

Russian banks and the Bank of Poland, to which Bulgaria owes a total of about \$600 million, did not accept the agreement and were to seek another solution with the Bulgarian government.

The government and the national bank has described the agreement as being "inevitable". But the opposition has criticised it strongly, holding that the scheduled payments are beyond the means of the Bulgarian economy.

Professor Ivan Anguelov of the Academy of Science has said that Bulgaria, in order to honour its commit-

ments, would have to reschedule debts which it owes to international financial institutions.

Otherwise Bulgaria would have to pay the Club of London, the Club of Paris of state creditors, the IMF, the World Bank and the G-24, \$741 million in 1995, \$910 million in 1996, \$1,313 billion in 1997, \$662 million in 1998, \$774 million in 1999 and \$862 million in 2000.

From 1995 to 1997 the servicing of the debt would amount to 19-29 per cent of the value of exports and to 8.7-14.3 per cent of gross domestic product.

Mr. Alexandrov has warned that there is a danger that the lev might fall in value quickly following the signing of the agreement because of a reduction of foreign currency reserves held by the national bank.

OPEL falls into loss

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The German Adam Opel car manufacturer fell into a net loss in 1993 but expects its performance to improve markedly in 1994, the company has said.

Adam Opel A.G. made a net loss of 571 million marks in 1993 (\$361 million) compared to a profit of 202 million marks in 1992, the board told the annual press conference.

The company is wholly owned by the U.S. General Motors car manufacturer.

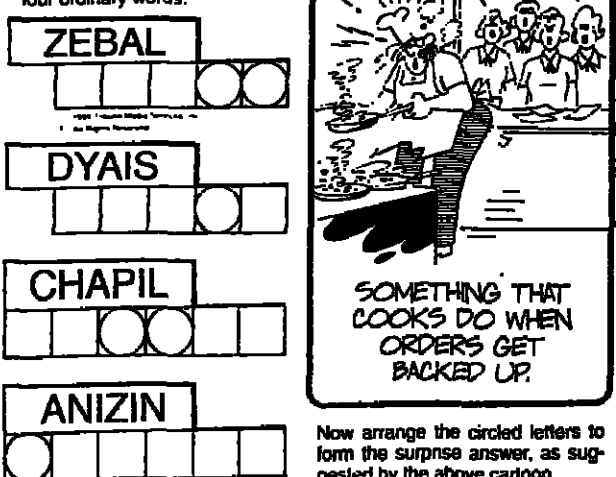
Heavy losses owing to changes in currency rates, the cost of reducing the number of people employed, and changes in production resulting from the launch of the new Omega model lay behind the deterioration of the results.

THE BETTER HALF, By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THEY

Yesterday's Jumbles: LILAC CHANT ENTICE SINGLE Answer: What you sometimes get from the radio — STATIC

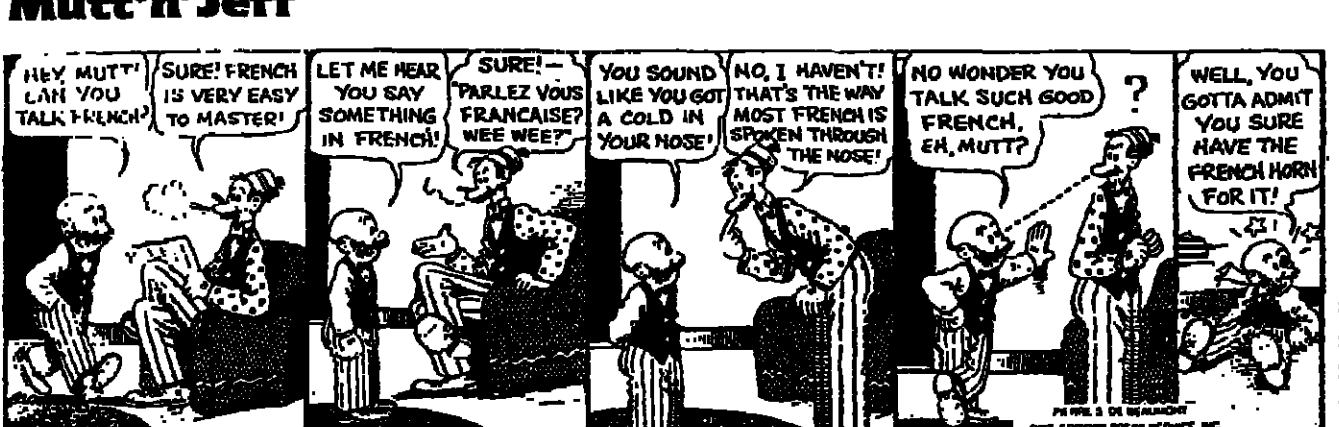
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Lyell Rodack



Sound on sound

By Jean-Claude Elias

Producing sounds is one of the many features of a personal computer (PC). While a standard PC comes fitted with a small, cheap speaker and has very limited possibilities in terms of tone colours, the Apple Macintosh is sold with quality music circuitry. Optional sound cards however can be added to the PC, putting it singing capabilities on a par with the Mac's.

Specialised magazines have published numerous articles comparing the quality of the sound produced on the PC and the Mac.

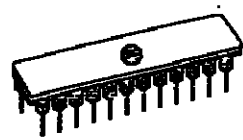
Sound Blaster is the most widely used PC music option. Different versions are available in the Jordanian market with prices ranging from JD 70 to JD 300. The kits include the electronic board and a pair of speakers. Their installation is easy and does not require professional assistance.

Once your PC equipped with a sound card, all the games that you may have will play with realistic music. Though synthesised, it is convincing enough, and anyway, remains much more ear-pleasing than the PC's built-in speaker.

If you are a Windows user, a sound card allows you to assign sounds to different actions or functions. Each time you start or close Windows, on each question or exclamation, a specific music can be heard. Instead of the painful "beep", a harp chord or a trumpet solo can be heard. Opening Windows, you will be greeted with an orchestra-like salute.

Sound Blaster or Sound Galaxy also allow you to record your own "waves" of music and to assign any such wave to any situation or action. However, if you think of recording real songs and playing them back through your PC, you're in for a disappointment — a maximum of 60 seconds per recording is allowed. Unless you decide to purchase professional, studio oriented sound cards that would cost you anything from JD 1,000 to JD 5,000.

chip talk



The most attractive feature of software, like MS-Word or MS-Excel, when used in conjunction with a sound card is the possibility to integrate sounds in your very text or your spreadsheet. Type a sentence in MS-Word, describing your visit to the zoo and integrate a lion's roar (that is the actual, previously recorded sound) in the middle. Or, record a memo that will always play back, next to a series of figures in Excel.

As impressive as it can be, adding sophisticated sound to about any software in your PC is not really practical, unless, of course, there is a very good reason to do that. Sound is lengthy to process and occupies a lot of disk space. MS-Word or MS-Excel files, if containing sound waves, will take longer to start and longer to save. Moreover, don't you sometimes dream of doing some writing with your PC with no sound around but the silence of your room and the birds tweet? Not to mention when you're working at night, at home, and the rest of your family is asleep.

Many PC users complain about the noise of the computer's fan, the hard disk motor and last but not least, the printer's rumble. Why would they add the headache of a sound card?

Except for PC games where a Sound Blaster or a Sound Galaxy have become a must, and computer based professional music production, a quiet PC is what a normal person would want.

Selling diseases

By E. Yaghi

Every evening under the slender arched neon light, the corn vendor parks his wooden cart near a busy shopping centre and patiently waits to sell his wares. A large aluminum pot emitting out a continuous cloud of steam, contains golden ears of succulent looking corn. On the same cart, right next to the corn pot, a large aluminum bowl is filled to overflowing with "turnos", a bean-like substance which has an appealing taste once prepared and salted. Neither container is ever covered and passing cars spray a fine film of almost invisible dust over the hot food. Mr. Corn Man is far from a picture of health or cleanliness. His clothes appear as if he has worn them forever and they are not only wrinkled and tattered but grimy with scum, and the Corn Man himself looks as if he hasn't bathed for at least a year.

Some might be amused by the sanitary practices of the vendor. A typical routine a few nights ago went as follows. First, he dipped a sponge into water the corn steams in and proceeded to wipe off his cart. He continued to dip the sponge in the water and clean his cart until the red vinyl paper became wet and shiny, giving a false impression of cleanliness. However, the water the corn sat in grew filthier and filthier. After he finished dunking the sponge into the corn pot, the vendor then sat down on the sidewalk and commenced to pick his nose as if he were digging for gold. This effort took him some time and when he finished, he never bothered to wash (of course, he had no water available to do this anyway) and at once began to put his hands all over the turnos to make sure he did an expert job of spreading his germs and give his product extra flavour. As if this weren't enough, adding insult to injury, he personally touched every ear of corn to guarantee inoculating everything he could with his special brand of spices. Once he manhandled all his food, he then sat down once again, and started scratching his head. Well, he scratched and scratched until whatever was itching him should have certainly died. Somehow, his fingers then found their way back to his nose again and he started digging for the gold that's buried deep within "them thar hills," until he got

tired. Some young men clean and trim-looking approached him and "viola" the Corn Man took some paper to wrap the corn in and handed each a snug ear swathed in the same paper that he had previously collected off the streets from small school children who had discarded their copybooks. The young men seemed happy enough and walked off proudly hugging their little bundles of diseases.

Well, what should a vendor do when he doesn't have customers under that long, cool summer night where the big and little dippers gossip and sparkle while the moon smiles? He knew perfectly well what he should do and that's clean his cart once more, so he soaked his sponge in the steaming, by now murky-looking, liquid and washed his vehicle down until it shone. Not too far away, in a nearby park, another dusty, scrubby man began calling: "Tea, tea, who wants a hot cup of tea?" He, the Tea Man, carried a large teapot and a few paper cups to sell his beverage to anyone who cared to feel more at home. And just across the way, another man pushing a cart-load of sesame bread spit all the way down the street as he walked.

Corn, turnos, tea and sesame bread, how lucky can one get? So many diseases all cuddled in joy waiting to be spread to the unsuspecting. But, far from amusing, it is outrageous that such events continue to occur. Where are the health inspectors? Do these vendors have permits to sell their products and are their foodstuffs and containers tested for bacteria count? How can any person even thinking of selling food be permitted to do so in befouled clothes and why aren't such persons wearing uniforms that are washed and ironed every day to say the least? And how can anyone with a conscience allow a man who picks his nose and washes his cart in corn water sell anything to anyone, much less food? The most susceptible customers are small children who care nothing about, nor understand, the difference between clean and dirty food. Definitely, as long as such despicable persons continue to sell diseased food, we will have problems with outbreaks of typhoid, dysentery, diarrhea, and many other illnesses that plague our country as foolishly we wonder why.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

GOOD MORNING

Your actions, dear reader, is the true mirror that reflects your personality.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Please, attempt to answer these questions to discover yourself!

- Do you try to be a hero in someone else's situation?
- Do you try to use the truth as a way of expressing your hostility?
- Do you try to overdo anything?
- Do you try to avoid constructive criticism?
- Do you try to love someone who can't or won't love back?
- Do you try to criticise others for defects you have yourself?
- Do you try to strive for perfection?
- Do you try to strive for humility?
- Do you try to say anything in a group if you can't say anything positive?
- Do you try to tear yourself down or build yourself up on other people's account?
- Do you try to be extra nice to people you don't like much?
- Do you try to boast?

If your answer is "no", you are certainly a successful person.

If your answer is "yes",

Try HARD to stand for something.

Otherwise, you'll fall for anything.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- Whom do you love? *Man tohib?*
- Whom did you see yesterday? *Man ra'ayta am?*
- Whom did you give the money to? *Le-man astaytal fulous?*
- Whom do you speak to? *Le-man tatakallim?*
- Whom can I trust? *Man yomkinoni an athika behi?*
- Whom will you visit tonight? *Man sawfa tazoor hazih-laila?*
- Whom did she marry? *Man tazawwajat?*
- Whom must you respect? *Man yajib an tasharim?*
- Whom must we worship? *Man yajib an na'bud?*
- Whom can you help? *Man tastati an tosa'id?*
- Whom can I ask? *Man astati'an as'ala?*
- Whom do you meet on your way every day? *Man tokahl fee tareekika kolla youm?*

JOKES

- ★ LADY: "Is this cloth fashionable?"
SALESMAN: "Yes, it's the latest fashion, my lady."
LADY: "But I'm afraid it would fade away."
SALESMAN: "No, never, never. I've had it here for 5 years and is still preserving its colour!"
- ★ JUDGE: "When will you give up stealing, man?"
THIEF (laughing): "When I become a millionaire, sir!"
- ★ While talking to his father, the little boy, on seeing a donkey, asked him:
"Do donkeys marry, papa?"
"Who but donkeys marry, son?!"

- ★ The secretary arrived at the office one hour late. Her clothes were ragged and stained with blood. The moment the director spotted her, he asked:
"Where have you been, Lucy?"
"I fell down from the sixth floor, sir."
Inquiringly, the man said: "Did your fall last an hour, my dear?"

SPORTS ODDITIES

- J.M. Barnett of Australia jumped the rope 11,810 times (about 4 hours).
- The longest wrestling match — Alf Davey of England wrestled John Shea two-and-a-half hours before a fall. (Michigan-1908).
- Jack Terry crossed the English Channel from Dover to Calais on a tricycle. He made the trip in 8 hours, kept afloat by the rubber tires and steering with his rear wheels — July 28, 1883.
- Louis Cyr, famous Canadian strongman, lifted 545 pounds with one finger!
- Milo, ancient Greek wrestler, threw a 300 lb (136.1 kg) man a distance of 200 feet (60.96m)!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

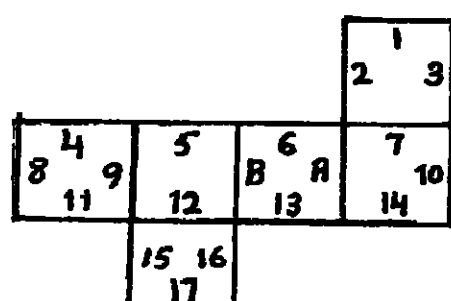
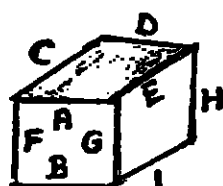
PUZZLES

(A) WHAT IS IT?

1. What foot has no leg? (.....)
2. What mouth has no teeth? (.....)
3. What shoe is never brushed? (.....)
4. I threw it as white as snow, like gold on the table it fell below. (.....)
5. Two hookers, two lookers, four props and a swing-about. (.....)

(B) WHICH IS WHICH?

Each figure at the right is the same as the box at the left, but opened up. The letters A and B are the same edges in both figures. Match the numbers of the edges of the open box with the letters of the opened box. Write X for the edges that don't show.



- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
- 12 13 14 15 16 17

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the biggest planet?
2. When was the United Nations Organisation founded?
3. Who wrote Lady Chatterley's Lover?
4. When was the French Revolution started?
5. What does G.A.T.T. stand for?

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, June 30

8:30 Da Beat's On

9:15 Bony

Looks Can Kill

A murdered show girl bears a striking resemblance to the daughter of Vinceti, Bony's and Frank's boss. Could she be the intended target?

10:00 News In English

10:15 Murder She Wrote

A Test Of Wills

Jessica's acceptance of her millionaire friend's invitation to visit his island brings her no pleasure, as a mysterious murder takes place.

Friday, July 1

8:00 Sixty Minutes

10:00 News In English

10:15 Emilie

Despite previous frustrating attempts, Emilie's suggestion to stage a play at school bears fruit.

Saturday, July 2

7:15 The Rogue Stallion

8:05 World Cup Soccer Match

Live From Chicago

10:00 News In English

10:15 Feature Film — Mrs. Delafield Wants To Marry

Starring: Katherine Hepburn and Denholm Elliot

The widowed Mrs. Delafield has to make a choice: To listen to her heart and marry the doctor she loves, or listen to her children's objections, who fear the loss of her inheritance.

Sunday, July 3

7:15 The Investigator

8:05 World Cup Soccer Match

Live from Dallas

10:00 News In English

10:20 Respected Family

Ruth is assessing Victoria's behaviour when she gets a job in a store.

10:50 The House Of Eliott

Alexander and Evie become more than friends, and he offers to help in their investigations against their bank manager... and the police is notified.

11:35 World Cup Soccer Match

Live from Los Angeles

Monday, July 4

7:05 World Cup Soccer Match

Live from Orlando

9:00 G.P.

The Sleep For Reason

The continuing story of Jessy Watson, whose nightmares force him to see a psychiatrist. His wife's life, however, remains in danger.

10:00 News In English

10:20 World Cup Soccer Match

Live From San Francisco

Tuesday, July 5

8:05 World Cup Soccer Match

Live From Boston

10:00 News In English

10:20 Matrix

Lapses In Memory

For \$2 million, a young woman accepts that a "memory gadget" be implanted in her head, in order for her to "remember" the past, the present and look into the future... little does she know that her "memories" will threaten her father's life.

11:25 World Cup Soccer Match

Live from New York

Wednesday, July 6

8:30 Coach

It Came From N.Y.

Haydn's daughter Caroline, spoils her father with gifts and dinner invitations in order to make him love her more, as she knows he has always wished she was a boy.

9:10 The World Of The Thirties

10:20 Poldark

As Ross rejoices with the news of him becoming a father he sadly joins Brodie and friends to mourn the death of her husband, and tries to look into the source of the money he left to his poor wife.

Study: Young fans get big dose of smoking at the movies

By Laura Neergaard
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Smoking in the movies may not be as glamorous as Bogie and Bacall once made it, but a new study says there is still more lighting up in American movies than in the society that makes them.

Smoking has dramatically declined since the 1960s, but University of California (UC) researchers who reviewed 30 years of films say Hollywood didn't catch on.

Not only are cigarettes still prevalent, movie heroes are three times more likely to smoke than the real-life role models of American society, the study concluded. This has researchers worried about an undue smoking influence on young moviegoers.

Why should people care if fantasy figures smoke? "The impression kids get from watching these movies is that most people smoke and smoking is something done by desirable figures," said UC re-

searcher Stan Glantz. "It's not the bad guys who are smoking, it's the good guys."

Anti-smokers have long complained that cigarette makers manipulate movies. In one highly publicized incident, Philip Morris paid \$350,000 to get its cigarettes in the James Bond movie *Licence To Kill* — although the movie credits carried a health warning about smoking.

The industry stopped these "paid product placements" in 1990 even though they didn't influ-

ence moviegoers, insisted Tobacco Institute spokesman Thomas Lauria.

"The sight of a smoker does not another smoker make," he said. "This is propaganda by a prominent anti-smoking activist who wants you to see a sinister plot."

Movies shouldn't be puritanical, conceded Mr. Glantz. Many characters need to smoke to be believable, as soldiers did in *The Longest Day*, the 1963 epic about D-Day. And, sure, gangsters smoked in *The Godfather*. But what about E.T.,

the cuddly extraterrestrial of 1985 whose adopted mom smoked? or *Ghostbusters*, the 1984 hit comedy about de-haunting New York City?

"Smoking had nothing to do with *Ghostbusters*. But all of a sudden they all break out cigarettes — it was almost a disjoint in the plot," Mr. Glantz said. "Much of the smoking we observed wasn't appropriate to the action."

The study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, looked at two randomly picked

movies from the top-10 grossing American films of each year from 1960 through 1990.

Researchers spotted tobacco or a tobacco reference 785 times in the 62 films, 78 per cent of which was on-camera tobacco use. This use did not decline over the decades even though the number of Americans who smoke dwindled from 42.4 per cent in 1964 to 25.5 per cent in 1990.

"That's counter to what surveys show most people think and to what we ex-

pected to find," Mr. Glantz said.

Who smoked did change. In the 1960s, 38 per cent of movie smokers were major characters, compared with 26 per cent in the '80s.

But the number of young adults smoking on camera more than doubled from 21 per cent in the 1960s to 45 per cent in the 1980s compared to 26 per cent of their real-life counterparts. And although only 19 per cent of Americans of high socioeconomic status smoke — the real-life role

models, according to researchers — 57 per cent of their movie counterparts do, the study said.

That statistic is the one that bothers Mr. Glantz. Smoking is portrayed as normal behaviour "by people who, if you were a teenager, you'd like to be like," he said.

He said he plans to continue the study to see if the Tobacco Industry's pledge to stop buying movie time has changed post-1990 movies. "Just subjectively, I don't think so — but we'll see."

Men and migrants — unexpected motivators for small Muslim families

By Ayesha Khan

ISLAMABAD — Turkey's fertility decline is unique in the Muslim World, and men seem to be playing a key role.

Turkish women have an average of three children each, compared with four or five for their counterparts in Egypt. Family size has declined faster and further than in most of its neighbours in the Middle East.

Strong economic development, extensive reforms to improve the status of women and government population policy are among the factors behind the shift, according to a recent study by Cem Behar of Bogazici University in Istanbul for the Population Council in Cairo.

But the study reveals another, more unexpected, factor: despite widespread knowledge about family planning methods and the availability of services, male withdrawal has been the most

common method.

In 1988, three-quarters of all married couples were taking measures to prevent conception. More were relying on male methods than female methods, with withdrawal most popular — used by 31 per cent of couples using contraception.

Family planning workers tend to dismiss male withdrawal as unreliable. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, does not promote it as a way of controlling fertility.

But data shows that in Turkey the failure rate is lower than that for the Pill, the IUD, condoms or foam. Men in rural areas score highest in successful withdrawal, with the failure rate increasing with the level of the husband's education.

Mr. Behar argues that there is a long history of Turkish men participating in responsible parenthood and preventing conception if circumstances require. Istanbul led the way

during Ottoman rule at the turn of the century, when the citizens of the city were perhaps the first sizeable Muslim group in the world to practise family planning widely.

Male initiative in the process is still strong — only 2.5 per cent of married Turkish women face opposition from their husbands over using contraception. Withdrawal remains a favourite. Almost half the women using it regard it as straightforward, cheap and with no side-effects to their health. More than 20 per cent say their husbands prefer it.

Another challenge to accepted notions of how reductions in the birth rate are achieved comes from Dr. Youssef Courbage of France's National Institute of Demographic Studies, who points to the influence of migrants abroad.

Up to 10 per cent of Morocco's working population is abroad, mainly in Europe, and it is

not only money they send home — between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion a year — but ideas.

Europe's small family norm affected Moroccan migrants, says Dr. Courbage, and the number of children in migrant families fell from more than six in the 1960s to 3.5 in 1990.

Dr. Courbage says the fall in fertility among migrants preceded the reduction in Morocco as a whole and may have influenced it, because, he says, Moroccans stay in closer touch with relatives at home than do other Muslim workers in the Gulf.

Dr. Courbage describes the Moroccan migrant as "a decisive agent of social, familial and demographic change." The money they send home affects the consumption habits of their relatives, increases their aspirations and causes them to re-evaluate the relative costs and benefits of children.

In addition, international migration from Morocco has speeded up rural-

urban migration at home, and urbanisation itself is a major factor in the trend towards smaller families. Female education is believed to be closely linked with increases in contraceptive use, and 85 per cent of girls in towns attend school, compared with only 35 per cent in the countryside.

But Dr. Courbage warns against oversimplifying the link. He notes that declines in family size have not taken place in Egypt and Jordan in line with their levels of female education. Illiterate Moroccan women, for example, have fewer children than secondary school graduates in Jordan.

Education alone, he argues, is not enough. Other factors exert a major influence on family size, including greater numbers of working women and, as in Morocco, the impact of foreign migration — Panos Features.

Contraceptive failure

Rates of failure per 100 couple/years of use

	Turkey	US	Philippines
The Pill	26	3	0.1
IUD	5	5	2
Condoms	15	10	10
Foam, Tablets	27	18	NA
Withdrawal	14	NA	NA
Rhythm	12	19	14

NA: Not available

● Married women using modern contraception

Turkey 31%
US 69%
Philippines 22%

● In Turkey, failure rate rises with husband's education

Withdrawal:
Primary level 12%
University 22%
Rhythm:
Primary level 9%
University 15%

U.S. wants to check everything from apples to ketchup for pesticides

By Robert Greene
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In expansive new proposals, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wants to regulate the amount of pesticide residues on the food we eat — everything from supermarket apples to ketchup.

The agency says it's time to worry about the amounts of chemicals that show up in meals, not just the residues on crops leaving the farm. The idea in proposed legislation and new rules under discussion would be to set limits on how much residue is acceptable on food.

That sounds like a common-sense notion, but it's not the way things are. The first pesticide regulations sought to assure farmers weren't misusing chemicals, said Dr. Lynn Goldman, the EPA's top official in charge of pesticide regulation.

Concerns about the safety of food followed. The starting point under the new plan is food safety, moving backwards in the food chain to the farm. "It's a great idea," said

Richard Wiles, in charge of pesticide issues at the Environmental Working Group, an organisation that closely watches the impact of agriculture on the environment.

Between harvest and the dinner table, pesticides wear off, are washed off, get peeled or are diluted during processing and mixing. The government now sets different tolerances for pesticide residues in processed foods such as corn oil only if the residue is concentrated in the end product.

The agency also may

propose to set tolerances — acceptable residues of chemicals that may cause cancer or other ailments — based more on how foods are likely to be consumed.

Tolerances on corn now consider the whole plant with the husk on. Iceberg lettuce tolerances don't consider that the lettuce is washed and most people throw away the outer leaves.

In recent testimony before a House agriculture subcommittee, Mr. Goldman tried to portray the idea of setting different

tolerances at the farm gate, the food processor and the retail store as farmer friendly.

"If we took that dinner plate standard and applied it at the farm gate, then we might not be able to allow a perfectly reasonable use of the pesticides to meet the needs of the farmers," she said.

But the American Farm Bureau Federation won't buy into the notion. Nor will the food and pesticide industry, which at one point supported it.

Industry doesn't like the pesticide legislation

offered by the administration because a more conservative way of measuring risk will lead to tighter restrictions all around. Regulators could no longer consider the benefit of higher, more efficient production of crops when setting tolerances in raw goods, for instance.

The bill would take into account the special vulnerability of children because of their immature bodies and tendency to consume more fruits and vegetables by body weight. Other exposures, such as bug sprays in houses, would be

considered in determining how much can be allowed before filling the "risk cup."

The idea of different acceptable residues along the food chain means the Food and Drug Administration will be concentrating more of its inspectors at canneries and supermarkets.

The change would create an enforcement nightmare that the government lacks the money and people to enforce, industry says. And there's the prospect of fees to pay for it all.

The government, for instance, may be setting safe levels for pesticides in everything from fresh tomatoes, to tomato paste, to ketchup, to spaghetti sauce, to stewed tomatoes, said Juanita Duggan, chief lobbyist for the National Food Processors Association.

"The enforcement and the testing and the resources that would be drawn into trying to establish and then make sure that you meet two arbitrary tolerances are mind boggling," she said.

Arthritis increasing as U.S. population ages

By Jerry Schwartz
Reuter

ATLANTA — As the U.S. population ages, the percentage of Americans who say they have problems from arthritis has increased and will increase even more dramatically over the next 25 years, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

In its weekly report on health issues, the Atlanta-based agency said a 1990 survey of nearly 60,000 people found that 15 per cent of all Americans, or about 37.9 million people, said they suffered from arthritis. That compared to about 14.5 per cent of the population five years earlier.

About 3.4 per cent of all those surveyed said their

ability to engage in everyday activities was limited in some way by arthritis.

By the year 2020, CDC estimates that the rate of arthritis will increase so that about 18.2 per cent of the population will suffer from arthritis, according to Dr. Chad Helmick, chief of the epidemiology section of the CDC's Ageing Studies Branch.

"This is purely a function of the ageing of the population," Dr. Helmick said. "Older people tend to have arthritis more than younger people, and there will be more older people in 25 or 30 years." According to the study, 49.4 per cent of all Americans over the age of 65 said they had arthritis.

Dr. Helmick said arthritis was defined for purposes of the study as encompassing a number of

conditions including "gout, lupus, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis and bursitis" as well as medically diagnosed forms of rheumatoid arthritis. "We wanted a definition that would include the conditions most people would understand as joint problems. What we excluded were back problems, tumours and injuries."

Women were more likely than men, by a margin of 17.1 per cent to 12.5 per cent, to report arthritis. And although the rates of arthritis for blacks and whites were roughly equal, blacks were more likely to report limitation in their activities resulting from arthritis.

Most striking were the differences between people of different education and income. People with

less than eight years of schooling were twice as likely as those with a college education to report suffering arthritis and those making \$10,000 per year or less were more than three times as likely as those making \$35,000 to report arthritis.

"There are a couple of theories about the education difference, but there's no data," Dr. Helmick said. "One is that people with less education or income have to be more physically active," Dr. Helmick noted, thus either contributing to arthritis or making those suffering from it more aware of the problem.

"The other theory is that there are a number of occupationally related job injuries that can contribute to arthritis," Dr. Helmick said.

AIDS science row 'at turning point' — Pasteur director

PARIS (AFP) — An inquiry into the discovery of the AIDS virus is at a "turning point", and could double the amount French scientists get from royalties, Pasteur Institute chief Maxime Schwarz said.

The U.S. Patents Office has told a two-year inquiry by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) it did not know a French team had also developed a detection test when it gave a patent to the American test, Mr. Schwarz told AFP.

According to the Chicago Tribune newspaper, a Patents Office official said she would not have given the patent if she had known.

American Professor Robert Gallo and French

Professor Luc Montagnier clashed when they both claimed to have discovered the HIV virus which causes the fatal Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, and developed their own detection tests.

After intervention in 1987 by the then U.S. President Ronald Reagan and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, an agreement was reached which split royalties for the test roughly in half.

The Chicago Tribune said Dr. Gallo had a "legal obligation" to inform the Patent Office about the Pasteur's work and the fact that its own research was carried out on a virus supplied by the French institute.

Until now it was thought the two teams

were working on two different viruses. "If we had not supplied this virus to them, they might not have developed their own test," commented Mr. Schwarz.

The virus had been sent "on condition that it was not used for industrial or commercial ends," he added.

The federal report reaches no conclusion but "is very critical towards Dr. Gallo and could mark a turning point in this affair," concluded the Pasteur director, who declared himself to be "pleasantly surprised."

One consequence, according to Mr. Schwarz, is that the Pasteur Institute may now get a greater share of the test royalties, which have generated at

least \$34 million since 1987.

Around \$20 million of that has gone to the HHS and \$14 million to the Pasteur.

Its first chance to renegotiate terms will come this July, at a meeting of the Franco-American foundation set up to manage the 1987 agreement. "For us, it is no longer a question of ethics but of money," said Mr. Schwarz.

Under the current agreement, the institute receives about \$800,000 (five million francs) per year in royalties, compared to 90 million francs in AIDS research costs.

"If we obtain satisfaction, we will get double that amount," he said.

Ex-Communist states see major surge in TB — WHO

By Robert Evans
Reuter

GENEVA — Former Soviet Bloc countries face an alarming resurgence of tuberculosis which has sent death rates soaring and could pose a threat to Western Europe, World Health Organisation (WHO) experts said.

The United Nations agency said the surge had been recorded since the

collapse of the Communist system across the region in 1989-1990 and the breakdown of health care during the transition to market economies.

"TB deaths are increasing in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union because deteriorating social conditions are ruthlessly exposing weaknesses in many of the region's TB control programmes," WHO specialist Arata

Kochi said.

In a report issued in Geneva and Warsaw, the U.N. agency said an estimated 29,000 died in the former Communist states last year from TB — the major infectious disease killer of adults across the world.

This represented a jump from around 6.1 deaths for every 100,000 of the population in 1990 to some 6.7 in 1993, Dr.

Kochi told Reuters from the Polish capital where he was attending a meeting of regional TB programme managers.

And a Polish expert told the meeting the social conditions in the region "are ripe for a real explosion of TB cases in the next decade."

The TB death rate in major industrialised countries — including Western Europe, the United States

and Japan — is 1.5 in every 100,000 people. It kills some three million annually around the world, mainly in developing countries.

Another WHO specialist, Mario Ravighione, warned the Warsaw meeting that unless the disease were controlled in Eastern Europe "it cannot be controlled in Western Europe...."

"Nearly 50 per cent of TB cases in some Western European countries are among foreign persons, often from Eastern Europe. There is no practical way to screen these immigrants and other international travellers," he said.

Although the state-run

health care system was often primitive in remote areas of the old Soviet Bloc, death and infection rates had been steadily declining since World War II, according to the WHO report.

Dr. Kochi, who heads the WHO's TB programme, said he feared that in some parts of Russia and other ex-Soviet states the rate was very much higher than the figures showed.

"We believe there is a lot of under-reporting," he said.

In major developed countries, increases in TB in recent years has been linked to the epidemic of infection from the HIV

body's immunity system, or to immigration.

"But the alarming story our data shows is that tuberculosis is increasing in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union without any help from HIV or immigration," Dr. Kochi said.

The report said TB deaths had stopped declining in 20 of the 27 former Soviet Bloc states, with the greatest increases in Armenia, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania and Romania.

Large cities were seeing the most dramatic surge. In Moscow, the annual incidence had nearly doubled over the past two

years from 27 to 50 cases per 100,000.

The report said the increase was partly due to the fact that most countries in the region were using old-fashioned control strategies including revaccination rather than WHO-recommended quick-effect chemotherapy.

But another major cause was underfunding of TB programmes and lack of drugs. "Regrettably, most new health care investments are emphasising large hospitals and expensive equipment rather than the most basic treatment and prevention services," the WHO declared.

U.S. holds up experimental AIDS vaccine testing

By Souk Chanthalangsy
Agence France Presse

BETHESDA, Maryland — A key branch of AIDS research in the United States may be set back from one to three years after officials decided to hold up large-scale human testing of two vaccines.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) advisory committee Friday recommended that the Institute continue, but not expand, the current vaccine trials of the two GP120 candidates in question.

NIAID Director Anthony Fauci accepted the 26-member committee's recommendation after an eight-hour public meeting. NIAID heads most of the National Institutes of Health's AIDS research.

Mr. Fauci's decision came after researchers detected the virus that causes AIDS in a handful of test volunteers. Researchers maintain however that the vaccines cannot transmit the AIDS virus and that the testing did not cause the infections.

The two glycoprotein "GP120" vaccines are designed to stimulate the body's immune system and increase its strength before AIDS infection.

The vaccines were considered by the scientific community as the most promising presently available.

Prior to limited human testing, the vaccines underwent clinical tests on animals, notably chimpanzees that demonstrated resistance to AIDS after injections of the vaccines.

"We should continue the current ongoing research programme on these two vaccines to get additional information, but not extend to the next phase and proceed with the trials in a large scale," Dr. Jack Killen of NIAID, said.

AIDS activists, normally advocates of early testing for anti-AIDS drugs, supported holding off on the large-scale testing.

They said people suffering from AIDS have been so disappointed with past testing programmes that if this programme failed there could be a risk of not being able to raise a large volunteer group for future experiments.

Genentech is the maker of one vaccine and Biocine — a joint firm made up of pharmaceutical companies Chiron and Ciba-Geigy — is the other. Testing of the two vaccines with more than 300 volunteers has been

underway since December 1992.

Large-scale testing would have involved one of two proposals to expand the experiment to between 5,000 and 10,000 people considered "high-risk individuals" for AIDS — primarily homosexual men and intravenous drug abusers.

The testing came under fire when six volunteers tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) though researchers insist the two vaccines, referred to as envelope vaccines because they are derived from proteins enveloping the HIV virus, could not transmit HIV.

"It has really nothing to do with the vaccines. The vaccines are genetically engineered. It's still radically impossible for these products to have transmitted the disease," Dr. Killen said.

Contrary to the majority of vaccines, GP120 does not come from a living virus, altered or natural, which renders the risk of contamination practically nonexistent, experts said.

However, these explanations have not calmed the concerns of a public particularly sensitive to issues related to the

transmission of the disease, for which no cure is currently available.

Large-scale experiments on the vaccines could be held up for one of three years and could slow research on AIDS vaccines in the United States. That time window could give experimental vaccines in other nations the chance to press ahead, said one researcher.

In particular he cited the ALVAC vaccine developed in France by a team from the Merieux Institute.

The laboratories that make these two products will also be strongly affected by the pause, with more than 300,000 doses already produced in anticipation of the programme.

Testing in the United States could now centre on gene-splicing — called Vector — techniques. Gene splicing would involve putting HIV genes into a carrier virus. Once inside the body the harmless mutant HIV might stimulate a more robust natural defence against AIDS.

Many panel members supported testing a Vector vaccine against an envelope vaccine as the most efficient use of testing funds.

New carriers helping spread malaria in Bangladesh

By Nadeem Qadir
Agence France Presse

DHAKA — Bangladeshi health authorities are warning that new patterns of Malaria transmission are emerging in this impoverished South Asian country where the disease is apparently spreading.

The government's health directorate said it appears that the anopheles mosquitoes, not previously carriers of malaria, are now transmitting the disease.

In addition, parasite resistance to common anti-malarial prophylactics, such as Chloroquine, is on the rise while insect carriers are growing resistant to DDT.

Doctors said the deadly strain of plasmodium falciparum parasites account for most of the deaths, but added that a large number of cases were being reported from the plains where patients were mostly hit by the plasmodium vivax parasite.

The directorate said, "At least 360 persons died of malaria... in six bordering districts of the country in (the) six months since January." So far, the number of people registered as stricken with the disease was nearly 100,000, it said.

The highest number of malaria deaths is one area — 115 — was registered in the region that includes the southeastern port city of Chittagong and the Khagrachari, Bandarban and Rangamati hill districts. Northern Netrokona and northeastern tea-growing Sunamganj districts followed with 50 and 35 deaths.

However, doctors said unofficially that the numbers of dead and ill were much higher because many cases in remote areas went unreported.

As residents heaved a sigh of relief with the start of the monsoon last week followed a long heat wave, doctors joined them for other reasons — the rain

will hamper the breeding of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Dhaka's new mayor, Mohammad Hanif, announced over the weekend a 50-million-taka (\$1.25 million) campaign against the mosquitoes.

Medical sources said hundreds of troops fighting tribal insurgents and officials in the hill region were suffering from malaria, with many cases of plasmodium falciparum.

The strain affects the brain and can cause death in 48 hours, the sources said, adding that 40 per cent of the malaria cases were of this type. Five per cent of the plasmodium falciparum victims die, it said.

Earlier this month, the Health Ministry said some 200 people died of cerebral malaria in northern and southeastern areas.

A ministry official said that authorities have rushed 160 medical teams to the affected areas and

set up 13 temporary treatment centres there.

"Everything within our means is being done, and medics have been advised to use injectable drugs to prevent deaths," one official said.

The ministry said its "vector control activities" aimed at the anopheles mosquito include promoting the use of deltamethrin-insecticide-treated nets in hilly areas.

It said indoor areas would be sprayed with Malathion insecticide in some of the affected areas, in consultation with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The WHO said malaria had returned with a vengeance around the world after a mass eradication campaign in the late 1970s.

According to Health Ministry estimates cited in 1987, malaria had returned to 49 of Bangladesh's 64 districts, and killed 155 people the previous year.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

HOLIDAY TIME
By Thomas W. Schler

ACROSS
1 See 102A
2 Father of Paris
10 Try
14 Spanish verb
15 Pray
19 Spanish
20 Friend in need
21 Strongly syllable
22 Enthusiastic
23 Holiday
24 Holiday
25 Holiday
26 Holiday
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36 Holiday

DOWN
1 Agony
2 Mourn
3 Not sure about
4 James Bond's school
5 Insect
6 Diplomat
7 Insect
8 Daughter of Calypso
9 Lander
10 Seaweed
11 BPOE word
12 Fairy
13 Norse god
14 Louisa May
15 Wild cat
16 Ram
17 Ram
18 Ram
19 Ram
20 Ram
21 Ram
22 Ram
23 Ram
24 Ram
25 Ram
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40 The Netherlands
41 The stars
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U.S. study: Teens adopted early doing fine

By Rick Hampson
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Adolescents adopted early in life are as well-adjusted as most other teenagers and in some ways do better, according to a recent study.

The study, called the largest of its kind, calls into question the widely held belief that adopted teenagers are more likely to be troubled than others their age.

More than three-quarters of the adopted teens studied "are in a very positive zone of mental health," said study co-author Peter Benson, a psychologist.

The four-year, \$1 million study focused on children who were less than 15 months old when they were adopted between 1974 and 1980.

Early adoption is "the key in the successful attachment of child to parents, and vice versa," Dr. Benson said. "We cannot overstate its power."

About 2,000 members of 715 adoptive families in Colorado, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota were questioned in the study funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

"What seems particularly important is how parents deal with adoption," Dr. Benson said. "In families that are thriving, adoption is a fact of life that is accepted and affirmed, not dwelt on... It's no big deal."

Only 27 per cent of the 881 adopted teens sur-

vived said being adopted "is a big part of how I think of myself."

Dr. Benson said the report undercut the common belief that adopted adolescents are more apt to have trouble developing an identity, to suffer mental problems and to lack a sense of well-being.

Among the report's other conclusions: "Transracially" adopted babies (most in the study were Asian) do as well when they reach adolescence as those adopted by parents of their own race.

Parents with adopted babies stick together. Only 11 per cent of those studied were divorced or separated, compared with 28 per cent in a national sample of couples with adolescents.

The adopted teens studied were slightly less likely to engage in "high-risk health behaviour," such as substance abuse and early sex.

The report was issued by the Search Institute of Minneapolis, a research organisation dedicated to children's issues. It was described as the largest U.S. study of adoptive families.

Dr. Benson said the idea that adoption complicates adolescence arose because a disproportionate number of adopted teens studied in the past were under psychiatric treatment, had been adopted later in life, or were volunteers.

Researchers had to rely on such groups because

confidentiality rules make studying adopted children difficult. But Dr. Benson said the grant allowed search to win the confidence of 45 adoption agencies and then locate families.

Only 47 per cent of the eligible families agreed to participate; 40 per cent declined and 13 per cent could not be located. Of the 775 families that agreed to participate, 715

answered and returned questionnaires — about 50 per cent of families located.

Frank Smisek of the New York State Association of Adoptive Parents said few of his organisation's members would be surprised by the study's findings.

"We've had to do a lot to become parents," he said. "It didn't fall on us accidentally."

ANSWERS

PUZZLES

(A) WHAT IS IT?

1. The foot of the mountain.
2. The river's mouth.
3. The horseshoe.
4. The egg.
5. The cow.

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(B) WHICH IS WHICH?

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. X | 2. F | 3. X | 4. X |
| 5. X | 6. F | 7. C | 8. D |
| 9. X | 10. D | 11. H | 12. I |
| 13. G | 14. E | 15. H | 16. G |
| 17. E | | | |

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BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Jupiter.
2. Aug. 24, 1945.
3. D.H. Lawrence.
4. 1789.
5. General Agreement on Tariff and Trade.

مكتبة ابن بطوطة

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tel Aviv Close
Sterling Pound	1.5525	1.5525
Deutsche Mark	1.5215	1.5215
Swiss Franc	1.5275	1.5275
French Franc	5.4105	5.4050**
Japanese Yen	99.94	99.27
European Currency Unit	1.2130	1.2131**

European Currency Unit

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	4.1800	4.5000	4.8700	5.2500
Sterling Pound	4.8100	4.9300	5.1300	5.6600
Deutsche Mark	4.7500	4.7500	4.7500	4.7500
Swiss Franc	5.3300	5.3300	5.3300	5.3300
French Franc	5.3100	5.3100	5.3100	5.3100
Japanese Yen	1.9500	1.9500	1.9500	1.9500
European Currency Unit	5.7500	5.7500	5.7500	5.7500

Precious Metals

Metal	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
Gold	335.50	7.50	Silver	5.20

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.6570	0.6590
Sterling Pound	1.0625	1.0721
Deutsche Mark	0.4558	0.4582
Swiss Franc	0.5130	0.5205
French Franc	0.1271	0.1278
Japanese Yen	0.00410	0.00425
Dutch Guilder	0.5887	0.5906

Other Currencies

Currency	Buy	Sell
Saudi Rial	0.1829	0.1838
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.2570	0.2580
Qatari Rial	0.1865	0.1875
Egyptian Pound	0.2010	0.2020
Omani Rial	1.7550	1.7610
U.A.E. Dirham	0.1865	0.1875
Greek Drachma	0.2610	0.2635
Cypriot Pound	1.5715	1.4020

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

U.S. \$100 costs	1.3830/40	Canadian dollar	1.5786/96
	1.5786/96	Deutschmarks	1.7690/00
	1.3277/87	Dutch guilders	32.50/54
	5.4080/30	Swiss francs	1558.29/7
	99.30/40	French francs	6.8740/90
	7.5875/75	Italian lire	6.1950/00
	6.8740/90	Japanese yen	1.5536/46
	1.5536/46	Swedish crowns	
		Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	
One sterling			
One ounce of gold	\$385.70/\$386.10		

Sudan revalues pound

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has revalued the official exchange rate of its pound currency by just over three per cent, continuing a trend begun in May. A state-owned newspaper said. Al Ingaz Al Watani reported a 3.22 per cent revaluation of the buying rate to 310 pounds per U.S. dollar from 320. The selling rate went to 313 pounds per U.S. dollar from 323, a 3.19 per cent change.

Kuwait allies reported unhappy at large trade share for U.S.

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait should spread trade more evenly among its allies because of concern over the large share taken by U.S. firms was not in the emirate's interests, a political scientist said in remarks published Wednesday.

"We should not put all our eggs in the American basket," Abdulla Al Shayeji, a political adviser to parliament, was quoted as saying by the English-language Arab Times.

He said a number of countries including Denmark, Argentina and Belgium might reduce diplomatic representation in Kuwait because of disappointment over what they saw as bias towards Kuwait's main military and trading partner.

"These are important friends and allies. Many of them played leading roles in Operation Desert Storm," Sheikh Shayeji, an associate professor of political science at Kuwait University, was quoted as telling a traditional Kuwaiti discussion group known as diwaniyah Monday.

Operation Desert Storm was the U.S.-led allied military operation which drove

Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

French and Canadian officials have also expressed concern over the greatly increased market share won by American firms since the war.

U.S. firms won almost 67 per cent of contracts awarded under an emergency reconstruction programme instituted immediately after the war.

Since then they have won a consistent 16 per cent share of non-defence imports. In 1992 U.S. non-military exports to Kuwait totalled \$1.3 billion, up almost 50 per cent since 1989.

America has won the lion's share post-war defence contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars. U.S. oil firms have also won a large slice of oil sector rehabilitation work.

The main concern over the U.S. trade share "centres on the government funds directed to reconstruction projects and even more importantly on the ministry of defence's expenditures, which rearmament expenses are the most important," the private Al Shall economic consultancy said in a recent commentary.

Turkey moves to revive domestic demand

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's leading banks slashed deposit interest rates Wednesday as the government sought to revive the economy by increasing domestic demand for goods.

Isbank and Akbank cut short-term rates by up to 10 per cent. The two banks, along with several others, have already cut their deposit and credit rates earlier this month.

"We want to grow in stability. For this, we need to raise exports. Exports never rise without a certain revival of the domestic market," Economy Minister Aykon Dogan told Reuters.

Leading Turkish carmakers, squeezed by increased costs and weakened demand, announced Thursday that they would sell cars at a loss. To compensate, the government halved taxes on car sales.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's government hopes that declining interest rates will help boost the domestic market and halt worker lay-offs. But some bankers fear that further declines in interest rates may channel savings into foreign currencies.

The treasury's domestic borrowing policy of lowering interest rates and extending the average maturity in 1993 pushed the economy into financial crisis in January.

Mr. Dogan is optimistic about the stability of the lira. "Decline in interest will urge banks to increase their consumer credits rather than buy foreign currency," he said.

Many banks effectively halted credits earlier this year.

"Overnight rates are running at around 30 per cent and the dollar at 31,000 lira. Now people are not investing their savings in foreign currency. We don't fear that fall in interest rates will raise foreign currency demand," Mr. Dogan said.

Mr. Dogan said annual inflation, running at around 118 per cent, would decline sharply in the second half of the year. Turkey aims to keep monthly price rises at below three per cent in the second half of 1994.

Ms. Ciller said interest rates would come down gradually.

Mr. Dogan said the second quarterly budget deficit would not exceed 10 trillion lira (\$319 million). It was 50 trillion lira (\$1.6 billion) in January-March.

Turkish officials, shrugging off calls by a top industrialist to reschedule treasury's foreign debts, said payments were proceeding smoothly.

"There is no need to reschedule foreign debts. Our foreign currency reserves at the central bank are already on the rise," said a government official.

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U.N. expresses 'consternation' as fighting rages in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — Fighting between Serbs and Muslims for a key supply route in Bosnia has intensified, with the United Nations Wednesday expressing consternation at the effective collapse of the latest truce.

The two sides clashed throughout Tuesday in the area around Mount Ozren, with shelling of a road the Muslims are trying to seize to secure a route between their strongholds of Zenica in central Bosnia, and Tuzla further north.

With fighting now back to levels seen before a month-long Bosnia-wide truce began on June 10, a senior U.N. officer has declared the ceasefire a failure.

"There is no peace in Bosnia and no ceasefire," said British Brigadier Andrew Ridgway in the central Bosnian town of Gornji Vakuf Tuesday. "After the end of the ceasefire (July 9), there will be at least 20 years of war."

Claire Grimes, a spokeswoman in Sarajevo for the United Nations, which sponsored the truce as a means of paving the way to a hoped-for political settlement, said Gen. Ridgway's statement

may have been "a bit of an exaggeration."

But she acknowledged Wednesday widespread "consternation" within the U.N. Protection Force at the deteriorating situation in Bosnia.

UNPROFOR spokesman Commander Eric Chaperon reported heavy shelling near the Bosnian Muslim held town of Zavidovici Tuesday evening, with the bulk of the 550 impacts recorded by the U.N. seen as coming from the Serb side of the line.

Maj. Chaperon said it was not clear whether the Serbs were trying to push back a renewed Muslim offensive or whether they had launched a counter-attack to retake ground lost to the Muslims in the latest bout of fighting in the area.

Muslim troops, no longer forced to fight on two fronts since they sealed a federation agreement with the Bosnian Croats, have launched an offensive against the Serbs in north-central Bosnia, taking significant amounts of ground.

The Muslim-held town of Travnik to the southwest came under Serb artillery fire

Tuesday and Wednesday, Maj. Chaperon said.

Unconfirmed reports from the Bosnian army said one person was killed and six wounded. The Bosnian Serb army accused the Muslims of killing six people in a shelling attack in the same area, the Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, said.

In Washington, the United States warned the warring factions against pushing for battlefield gains rather than a negotiated settlement.

"We are very concerned about some of the comments we've seen from a variety of parties in the former Yugoslavia, that they believe that there's something to be gained at this point on the battlefield," state department Mike McCurry told reporters.

"We feel, to the contrary, that this war has gone on so long, exhausted the resources of the parties, and that the only avenue available now to reconciliation and reconstruction is through a peace settlement," he said.

The United States has been a major force behind development of the latest peace plan, which aims to divide

Bosnia ethnically, assigning 51 per cent to Muslims and Croats and 49 per cent to Serbs who now hold 72 per cent of the territory.

Senior diplomats from the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany met in secret in Paris Tuesday to work on a final peace map and French officials reported the diplomats had made progress.

Foreign ministers from the five-nation "contact group" were expected to endorse the peace plan probably next week, before members of the group of seven industrial powers approved the plan at their summit in Naples on July 9-10.

But the special U.N. envoy in ex-Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said the fighting in Bosnia threatened prospects for peace and warned both sides to stop attacking U.N. peacekeepers or face NATO air strikes.

Mr. Akashi and his top military commanders were due in Brussels on Wednesday for meetings with NATO chiefs to discuss implementation of the proposed peace plan and their policy if the plan is rejected.



A group of 86 Haitian refugees looks up as the Coast Guard cutter Farallon pulls alongside the coast of Haiti (AFP photo)

U.S. intercepts 22 more Haiti boats

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Agencies) — An overworked and weary U.S. Coast Guard intercepted at least 22 more refugee boats off Haiti Tuesday, transferring hundreds of boat people to already swamped refugee facilities.

At least 460 more refugees were picked up after 1,486 boat people were intercepted off Haiti Monday, the Coast Guard estimated.

From Friday to Monday, 2,472 Haitians were plucked from boats, eclipsing the number for all of 1993. Monday's figure was the second-highest one-day total since the 1991 overthrow of elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The surge follows President Bill Clinton's liberalised refugee policy, under which chances of winning asylum have jumped from 5 per cent to 30 per cent.

Haitian politicians say the development will move a reluctant White House even closer to armed intervention to oust Haiti's military leaders, restore constitutional government and stop the refugee flow.

U.S. officials were reluctant to say the wave has crested. "There are still some boats out there we haven't gotten to," a Coast Guard spokesman, Petty Officer Rob Wyman, told the Associated Press.

U.S. embassy spokesman Stanley Schrager, who watched the repatriation of 170 Haitians at dockside Tuesday in Port-Au-Prince, said the Coast Guard ships are overworked and under "tremendous strain."

In the Coast Guard's biggest deployment since Vietnam, 15 cutters and patrol boats alternate between picking up refugees and ferrying them to U.S. refugee processing ships off Kingston, Jamaica — a 30-to-40-hour round trip.

Ten more warships patrol Haiti's coast to enforce a U.N. trade embargo; two U.S. Navy ships took in 221

of the refugees picked up Monday, Mr. Schrager said. At the USNS Comfort, a processing ship able to hold 1,000 refugees, U.S. immigration and U.N. refugee officials are putting in 30-hour days trying to interview all boat people to see if they are fleeing political persecution.

The United States may be forced to reopen a refugee camp on the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, if the huge increase in boat people continues, Defence Secretary William Perry said at the Pentagon.

Fears of a flood of asylum-seekers figured in the Bush administration's decision to send boat people back immediately. A policy Mr. Clinton continued.

But facing increasing protests from human rights groups as military killings and kidnapping rose in Haiti, Mr. Clinton changed the policy as of June 16. All boat people now get a hearing aboard a U.S. vessel to see if they are fleeing poverty or political persecution.

Inhabitants of this poor Caribbean nation have suffered repression and economic havoc since the army coup. U.S.-led sanctions, aimed at restoring Mr. Aristide to power, ban air traffic and most financial dealings between Haiti and the United States.

Haitians have fled by the tens of thousands. The Coast Guard has now intercepted 48,304 at sea since Mr. Aristide's ouster.



A Haitian infant is transferred from a small boat to the Coast Guard Cutter Durable off the coast of Haiti in this photo provided by the U.S. Coast Guard (AFP photo)

U.S.-N. Korea talks could be extended

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S.-North Korea talks in Geneva could extend beyond the initial two days planned in July if it appears progress is being made, the U.S. senior adviser on the Korean nuclear issue said Wednesday.

Robert Gallucci, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, also said that the United States will be looking beyond the nuclear freeze issue to possible past violations of nuclear agreements and North Korea's ballistic missile programme.

The United States is taking a "broader and thorough" approach to the military and economic issues and will present its case July 8, with North Korea expected to respond the following day, he said.

Both governments will then break away from talks to consult with their home governments and decide whether there has been sufficient progress to continue meeting in Geneva or to schedule a new round of talks later.

If North Korea demonstrates that it is serious about resolving the nuclear issues,

Mr. Gallucci predicted that the international community will respond favourably with improved relations.

Mr. Gallucci said the United States has been in close consultation with South Korea and Japanese officials visiting Washington this week about the upcoming U.S.-North Korea talks.

The proposed talks greatly eased tension over U.S. efforts to get United Nations sanctions to force North Korea to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections of its nuclear

Macedonia plays down border incidents

ZAGREB (R) — Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov said in an interview published Wednesday an incursion by Serbian troops over Macedonia's border would not lead to war.

U.N. officials and diplomats say a dozen Serbian troops are refusing to leave a hilltop position which Macedonia says is up to 250 metres inside its territory.

Asked by the Croatian newspaper Vjesnik whether tensions could ignite war in

light of his defence minister's warning to the Serbs to withdraw by Saturday or be "pushed", Mr. Gligorov said: "No, I don't believe and see no reason for it."

He acknowledged that Macedonia's tiny army was no match for the Serbian military but said the presence of 1,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops, including Americans, would be an important deterrent to further Serbian action.

Some 12 Serbian soldiers

have dug trenches and set up tents on Straza Hill 20 kilometres north of the Macedonian town of Kriva Palanka. "As far as we can tell it's a Macedonian territory," U.N. spokeswoman Elisabeth Baldwin said earlier in Skopje.

The incursion is the latest in a series of incidents in which Serbian soldiers have harassed Macedonian and U.N. forces patrolling the border, Ms. Baldwin said.

Azeri president arrives in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Azerbaijani President Geidar Aliyev arrived here Wednesday for a four-day official visit with the six-year bloody conflict in the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh set to top the agenda.

Mr. Aliyev — accompanied by a 100-strong delegation including the ministers of foreign affairs, economic and health — was greeted at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

He told reporters his visit was "aimed at boosting 'brotherly relations' with neighbouring Iran, which shares historical and cultural commonalities with Azerbaijan."

Mr. Aliyev, who is on his first visit to Iran since he became president a year ago, is expected to hold talks with Mr. Rafsanjani and meet spiritual guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The conflict over the Armenian-majority enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan and other issues in the Caucasus were expected to dominate the talks," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

He said the six-year war between Azerbaijan and the Armenians in the enclave in western Azerbaijan "is not in the interest of the region" and Iran was working to help end it.

Around 20,000 people have been killed since the enclave broke away from Azerbaijan in 1988.

Having suffered military setbacks and the loss of some territories, Baku has on several occasions asked for Iranian help to win the war, notably during a trip to Azerbaijan by Mr. Rafsanjani last October.

Mr. Rafsanjani said the two countries would also discuss bilateral ties.

Kidnapped Mexico banker released

MEXICO CITY (R) — Billionaire banker Alfredo Harp Helu, one of Mexico's richest men, was set free Tuesday by kidnappers who had held him hostage for more than 100 days.

Mr. Harp was released on a street in southern Mexico City five days after his family had agreed to pay a ransom thought to be \$30 million.

Mr. Harp, chairman of Banamex-Accival, Mexico's largest financial group, was kidnapped at gunpoint on March 14 while on his way to work.

His seizure, which followed a New Year's Day peasant uprising in southern Mexico and preceded by only a few days the assassination of ruling party presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, sent Mexico financial markets plummeting as investors worried about the country's stability.

Mr. Harp told the television news show 24 Hours — in a telephone interview from a family member's home that he was in good health, despite having been locked during his entire ordeal in a tiny, windowless room.

Mr. Harp said he had "no idea" where the room was located nor who were his kidnappers.

He shed little light on the circumstances of his release, but said that he had spent his time in captivity reading the Bible, doing exercises, listening to baseball games on the radio and marking the hours.

"It was exactly 106 days, which is 2,560 hours" in captivity," Mr. Harp said.

During the negotiation process the kidnappers sent to the news media here several photographs and a videotape of a bearded and haggard Harp. In letters that accompanied the images, Mr. Harp begged for his life.

Last week the kidnappers issued an ultimatum to the family that they pay the ransom or Mr. Harp would die.

Mr. Harp's son Alfredo, his lawyer and a Catholic priest appeared on 24 Hours Thursday to say the family had agreed to meet the kidnappers' terms.

The kidnappers originally asked for a ransom of \$100 million, but indicated in their final communiqué that the price of freedom had dropped to \$30 million.

Mr. Harp did not disclose how the money was paid, but said his son was waiting for him at a meeting point in southern Mexico City

Bernard Tapie detained

PARIS (R) — French millionaire politician Bernard Tapie, shouting abuse, was detained at dawn at his Paris home Wednesday, hours after parliament lifted his immunity on suspicion of accounting fraud and tax evasion, police said.

They said Mr. Tapie abused policemen who awoke him at his home at 6.05 a.m. (0405 GMT), five minutes after the earliest hour at which they can legally go into private homes.

Witnesses said fraud squad detectives had been staked out for three days at a hotel across the street from Mr. Tapie's central Paris mansion to ensure the newly-elected European Parliament member did not try to slip abroad to evade prosecution.

At least eight policemen went to his home and banged on the door repeatedly until they woke his staff.

Police sources said Mr. Tapie cursed the police and called them "fascists". His butler said detectives handcuffed Tapie at one stage but his hands were free when they took him away in a motorcade with sirens blaring.

They first drove him to the headquarters of the Paris Fraud Squad to file a complaint for insulting the police.

After three hours there he was taken, dishevelled and dejected, to the office of investigating magistrate Eva Joly by five plainclothes officers.

Justice sources said police had a warrant to take Mr. Tapie to the judge so she could formally place him under investigation in a case involving his luxury yacht, a preliminary to prosecution. "This is absolutely scandalous. I don't dispute the judicial process but there are proper ways of treating people," protested Noelle Bellone, an executive at his Bernard Tapie Finance Company.

"A little uproar was to be expected," Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said in a radio interview.

The National Assembly voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to lift Mr. Tapie's immunity in two probes involving his four-most-pleasure yacht Phoebe, France's largest, which had been registered as a commercial vessel for tax purposes.

Mr. Tapie, a populist left-winger often praised by Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, denied the charges, saying he was the victim of a political plot by the conservative government.

Judicial sources said Ms. Joly had feared Mr. Tapie could try to evade justice by going on holiday abroad until July 19, when his immunity as member of the European Parliament takes effect.

He has been in and out of judge's chambers for months, but it was the first time he had been taken there by force.

Bangladesh anti-fundamentalists vow to continue late leader's mission

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladeshis battling against a rising wave of Islamic fundamentalism in the country have vowed to continue their fight and to fulfill the dreams of their political mentor, who died earlier this week.

Jahanara Imam, 65, a writer who became the country's leading anti-fundamentalist campaigner, died in the United States Monday after losing a long battle against mouth cancer.

Ms. Imam and her secular movement alleged many of Bangladesh's Muslim fundamentalist leaders committed war crimes during the country's 1971 war of independence with Pakistan. She called tirelessly for them to be punished.

"I might die, but the campaign for the trial of war criminals will never die," were the last words entered in her diary before her death.

Ironically, Ms. Imam's death came after her arch-rival, Golam Azam, chief of the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami, won a court battle to have his Bangladeshi citizenship restored.

It was stripped from him by the government in 1972 for his alleged collaboration with the Pakistani army during the bloody nine-month war. Ms. Imam persistently alleged that Mr. Azam was responsible for war crimes in that period.

In 1992 she staged a mock "Peoples' Court", which sentenced Mr. Azam to death and urged the government to try him for alleged war crimes. The move resulted in Ms. Imam herself — along with 23 other people — being charged with treason. She was still on bail when she died.

The government agreed to put Mr. Azam on trial but did not set a date or say which law would be used.

Ms. Imam, known to her supporters as "mother," entered the political limelight in 1991 when she became leader of the anti-war crime group, the Committee Against Butchers and Collaborators of Bangladesh's 1971 Independence.

Under her leadership the committee launched a two-pronged campaign to fight

fundamentalists and to see that alleged war criminals came to justice.

In recent weeks, the rise of Muslim fundamentalism has become a key issue in Bangladesh, which has been rocked by demonstrations and violent clashes between fundamentalists and their opponents.

The unrest — which included bombings, riots and strike calls — came after the government ordered the arrest of prominent feminist writer Taslima Nasreen for allegedly criticising the Koran.

While some supporters believe Ms. Imam's death will be a setback for secular groups at a time when fundamentalists are trying to revive their movement, a committee spokesman pledged: "We will turn our grief into strength and make her dream a reality."

Dhaka newspapers have recalled her fight against those she accused of being responsible for the deaths of three million Bangladeshis — including her own son — during the war of independence.

The Daily Star described her as "one of our heroes of all time," adding Bangladeshis found in her "a celebration of our Liberation War."

The Bangladesh Patrika daily said Ms. Imam "rekindled the memories and tragedies" of the war, while the Morning Sun commented that she became the committee's leader by virtue of her patriotism and a high degree of political ethics.

But, significantly neither government nor opposition leaders have commented on her death, apparently fearing they may offend Muslims and jeopardise their Islamic votes by doing so.

Bespectacled, slim and ever smiling, Ms. Imam wrote a dozen books, including the prize-winning Bengali-language "Ekatruti Dighuti" or Those Days in 1971, which gave a vivid account of the horrors of the war.

The former school teacher, who lived in the northern Rangpur district, migrated to

what is now Bangladesh from India with her family, following the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947.

Meanwhile, gun-toting youths fired shots at the offices of a pro-Islamic daily as dozens were injured in clashes between Muslim hardliners and secular militants ahead of a nationwide strike, police and reports said Wednesday.

In the incident late Tuesday, the youths fired several shots at the building and smashed the windshield of a jeep belonging to the editor of Inqilab newspaper, A.M.M. Bahauddin, the Bengali-language daily said.

The driver was seized by the gang and beaten up although Bahauddin was not inside the vehicle at the time, it said. After hurling anti-fundamentalist insults, the group quickly left the scene, press reports said.

Police confirmed the incident, but could not give details, although Inqilab described it as an "attempt on Bahauddin's life."

The newspaper, which is owned by Moulana Abdul

Mannan, a former minister in cabinet of ex-President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, had come under criticism for various secular groups in recent days for allegedly inciting fundamentalist activities in Bangladesh.

Journalist Union officials said 24 newspapers have been attacked, mostly by fundamentalists, over the past three years.

The attack came amid rising tension between pro- and anti-fundamentalist groups over Thursday's nationwide general strike, first called by fundamentalists to demand punishment of fugitive Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasreen.

They are also demanding the incorporation of a blasphemy law in the constitution and a ban on several supposedly "anti-Islamic" dailies.

The anti-fundamentalist groups vowed to foil the plan and have called for similar action Thursday. Backed by major student, cultural and political groups, including the main opposition Awami League.

Domingo to direct Washington Opera

WASHINGTON (AFP) — World-renowned tenor and conductor Placido Domingo was named as the new artistic director of the Washington Opera, bringing his myriad of talent and experience to the 39-year-old opera house. During his initial four-year tenure scheduled to commence in July 1996, the Spanish-born Domingo said he plans "to sing with the company every season — if it is allowed."

"I am very honoured and happy to be able to plan the future of this great opera house," Domingo said. Domingo, 53, will succeed General Director Martin Feinstein who announced earlier this year he would retire at the end of the 1994-1995 season after 14 years in the position. "You can take the Washington Opera to new heights which I have never dreamed of," Feinstein told Domingo at press conference. Under Feinstein's leadership, the company grew from 16 performances of four operas to 65 performances of seven operas. The opera's budget also increased, from \$2 million to \$11.5 million, during his tenure. Because Domingo's schedule prevents him from taking up his new position fully until the 1996-1997 season, Feinstein will act as consultant for the upcoming season. Domingo first performed with the Washington Opera in 1986, when he starred in the world premiere of Gian Carlo Menotti's Goya. He called his new relationship with the Washington Opera "a happy reunion."

The Washington Opera is one of the largest in the United States and has boasted an average 98 per cent attendance rate for the past several years. It is the resident opera company of the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts. Domingo made his opera debut over 30 years ago at Monterrey, Mexico in Franco Zeffirelli's La Traviata. He then spent two and a half years with the Israel National Opera before embarking on a prolific career in Europe.

Little Miss Coppertone covering up
TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — After 41 years of flashing her bare behind, Little Miss Coppertone is covering up — but only for an educational campaign tied to new government forecasts of the danger from sun exposure. The popular logo for sun care products now sports a T-shirt and hat, and her frisky puppy is tugging on her shirt, not pulling down her swim trunks. The little girl, presumably bathed in sun screen, clutches sunglasses and a Coppertone bottle. She also has a lighter tan than the child who first graced Coppertone bottles in 1953, before the product contained sunscreen. "By covering her up, we're symbolically saying that times have changed. We all know more now about the relationship between overexposure to the sun and skin cancer," said Lewis Nolan, spokesman for Memphis, Tenn.-based Schering-Plough Healthcare Products, a division of Schering-Plough Corp. of Madison.

Schering-Plough's Coppertone and Tropical Blend sun care products led all other U.S. manufacturers last year with combined sales of about \$160 million. Its campaign coincides with the National Weather Service's addition of a solar-hazard rating to the daily weather report — a move aimed at preventing skin cancer and eye damage from harmful ultraviolet radiation.

Australian town booze bans anger drinkers
SYDNEY (R) — An Australian town desperate to reduce its alcohol problem Wednesday unveiled plans to limit alcohol sales, angering local white drinkers but pleasing aboriginal leaders who say alcohol is killing their people. Tennant Creek, 450 kilometres north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, stopped drinking for a day in April. Police reported a dramatic drop in alcohol-related crime. Now it plans to close the bars of the town's three hotels and two liquor shops every Thursday, the day local aborigines receive social security cheques. The town council also plans to ban third party sales of alcohol to taxi drivers, who are suspected of "grog running" operations into nearby aboriginal communities.

Hong Kong democracy bill survives by 1 vote

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's legislators narrowly defeated an amendment Wednesday which would have radically watered down Governor Chris Patten's democratic reform bill.

The 29-28 vote against the amendment put forward by the pro-business Liberal Party marked a significant victory for Mr. Patten in his drive to strengthen Hong Kong democracy before the colony returns to China in 1997.

But the amendment was carried only by the votes of the government's three remaining members of the Legislative Council. One analyst had said such a result would be a technical victory for Mr. Patten but a moral defeat. There were two abstentions.

Legislators have yet to vote on a number of other amendments and Mr. Patten's bill outright, but analysts had said that the Liberal Party amendments were the only ones which stood a realistic chance of being carried.

This would mean that the democratic reforms Mr. Patten announced almost two years ago will go into law unchanged later Wednesday or early Thursday, despite a furious campaign by Beijing to stop them.

China, however, has vowed to tear up any reform bill passed by the colonial legislature and hold new elections under its own rules in 1997.

Mr. Patten's bill gives all 2.7 million Hong Kong workers a second vote in occupational-based "functional constituencies," whereas the liberal amendment would have slashed this figure to little more than 200,000.

"No matter what kind of bill is passed by this chamber today, even if we support the package by the Liberal Party which is surrendering our rights, then all will be dismantled come 1997," said Martin Lee, who leads the United Democrats Party.

"Who in Hong Kong would want to live under a totalitarian regime or Communist rule? If they want to live under such a situation, they don't have to live in Hong Kong. Why don't they just go back to China?" he said in an emotional appeal to reject the amendment.

French intervention in Rwanda gains support



A Rwandan man, wounded by Rwandan Patriotic Front shelling, awaits emergency aid at an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital in the capital Kigali (AFP photo)

Kohl holds out for Dehaene — for now

BONN (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl held out Wednesday for the candidacy of Belgian Premier Jean-Luc Dehaene as head of the European Commission despite a British veto last weekend, should Mr. Dehaene believe he could still achieve a consensus.

"We must ask our partners if there is still a chance of agreeing on his candidacy. Afterwards, we will see," he said in a television interview on the private channel Sat 1.

Mr. Kohl said that Mr. Dehaene wanted a consensus, and would not allow a consensus among European Union member states to break down on his account.

The present deadlock over the choice of a commission president to succeed Jacques Delors "is not a very deep crisis," he commented.

Britain, which stood out against its 11 EU partners in blocking Mr. Dehaene's candidacy at the EU summit on Corfu last weekend, has said it will continue to oppose Mr. Dehaene as a successor to Mr. Delors.

Mr. Kohl said he was confident of finding a candidate acceptable to all 12 EU members before Germany hosts a special summit on July 15.

"I have no doubt that we will present a candidate to the European Council (on July 15) before the European Parliament opens," he said.

Earlier his foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, implicitly criticised Britain for its intransigence over Mr. Dehaene.

"Never has it been clearer in Europe that there is no future in everyone acting off his own bat," Mr. Kinkel told parliament in a policy speech.

Germany takes over the rotating EU presidency Friday.

"In making this appeal to its partners, the German government which holds the presidency from July 1, will do its utmost to reach a consensus on a successor for Jacques Delors, who has earned merit with his great service to Europe," Mr. Kinkel said.

"The European Union needs an energetic European at the head of the commission and this decision must be taken rapidly," he added.

"The last thing the Union needs at this decisive milestone would be a lack of purpose or readiness for consensus."

In line with instructions issued by Chancellor Helmut Kohl to his cabinet, Mr. Kinkel did not indicate what solution the government has in mind. Following the Corfu deadlock, Kohl convened a special European summit for July 15 to settle the matter.

The foreign minister said that in response to public preoccupations, the fight against unemployment and criminality would be two priorities of Germany's Union presidency of the next six months.

He pledged close cooperation with France, the next EU president after Germany, and also the succeeding ones of Spain and Italy, in promoting the ideal of European construction.

Mr. Kinkel indicated Germany would be promoting its vision of relations between the institutions of the European Union.

"The federal government will during our presidency accord particular importance to a close and trustful cooperation between council, commission and parliament,"

NAIROBI (AFP) — In a week since France launched Operation Turquoise, its controversial military intervention in Rwanda, French soldiers have not fired a shot, nor have they been fired at.

The operation is still far from winning support from all sides.

But critics who warned that the French would get embroiled in Rwanda's ethnic conflict just as U.S. and U.N. forces became entangled in Somalia's clan feuds last year are starting to concede that Operation Turquoise may achieve its humanitarian goals and help stem ethnic bloodletting.

Even the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) has softened its opposition after initially threatening to fight the French forces as hostile invaders and staging two demonstrations against the intervention.

Now the mainly Tutsi rebels say the operation is acceptable provided that it remains humanitarian, though they still bitterly reproach France for being "an accomplice to the genocide in Rwanda."

They say France armed and supported the regime of assassinated Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose militias have been blamed for the worst of an 11-week bloodbath in which up to half a million people, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus, have been butchered.

In a few days, French troops have identified Rwandans still in danger of being massacred.

By the end of the week, the French force will be at full strength with 2,500 soldiers and will have established a lifeline bringing in food, medicines and clothes from bases in Goma and Bukavu, in neighbouring Zaire.

The French "appear to be keeping their promises," said a Senegalese U.N. military observer forced to leave Rwanda last week because of threats from the rebels after Senegal supported the French intervention. "It may work."

Paris insists that its troops will avoid clashing with the rebels, who control two-thirds of Rwanda after

pushing back government forces in a series of sweeping advances since Mr. Habyarimana's April 6 death.

However as the RPF presses its offensive and moves steadily westwards it may soon come close to French positions, the farthest advanced of which are only 20 kilometres from the front line.

The French intervention has failed to halt the advance of the rebels who clearly scent all-out military victory within their grasp. Instead, they have stepped up their onslaught on remaining government-held sectors of the capital Kigali.

France sent troops to Rwanda after the rebels invaded from Uganda in 1990 and again in 1993 when they advanced close to Kigali.

Officially there to protect foreign nationals, they were accused by European aid workers and the rebels of helping Rwandan government forces counter the RPF offensive by acting as supervisors on the battlefield.

Government radio welcomed the arrival of the French as a victory.

But the French soldiers sometimes looked embarrassed by the warmth of the welcome they were given by Hutu authorities in the government-held west, where their mission was essentially

to rescue Tutsis from the machetes, grenades and clubs of extremist pro-government Hutu militiamen.

Some militiamen are openly hostile to the French mission to save Tutsis.

The rump government no longer dares voice its hope that the French will help its battered army, as it did in 1990 and 1993.

Instead it continues to welcome the intervention which according to two ministers "remains necessary because the RPF kills all the Hutus along their way."

But the government wants the French to fan out from the west into rebel-held territory in the east and north, a move that could trigger the kind of confrontation with the RPF that Paris is intent on avoiding.

As the French intervention has progressed, a growing number of mainly African countries have offered troops for Rwanda despite the Organisation of African Unity's initial opposition to the operation.

But it is still unclear whether the offers are for the French operation or the small United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, still awaiting the thousands of reinforcements and equipment promised by the Security Council in May.

All but 470 of the 2,500

U.N. troops in Rwanda were withdrawn in the early days of the bloodbath.

The French intervention is officially only to last as long as it takes to bring in the U.N. reinforcements.

However, it has hindered the work of the U.N. commander, General Romeo Dallaire, whom rebel leaders have refused to meet since the launch of the French operation.

French Defence Minister Francois Leotard said Wednesday French troops in Rwanda will not become a "buffer force" between the warring Rwandan government and rebel forces.

Mr. Leotard, who spoke as he visited a refugee camp 15 kilometres inside western Rwanda, said: "Our aim is to hand over to the humanitarian organisations, particularly to the Africans."

He had earlier made a tour of inspection of French bases at Goma and Bukavu in Zaire.

"France must not substitute itself for the Rwandans," Mr. Leotard said.

The answer to Rwanda's problems "cannot only be French. The real answer is the United Nations' mission," he said, adding that Rwanda must remain "a multi-ethnic country... and the only solution is political... despite the genocide."



A Rwandan man cries as his wife receives wounded by a Rwandan Patriotic Front shell emergency aid at an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital in the capital Kigali (AFP photo)

Germany's conscience-of-the-nation bows out

BONN (R) — An era ends in Germany Friday when President Richard von Weizsäcker, who for 10 years wielded a quiet moral authority which made him the undisputed conscience of the nation, steps down to make way for Judge Roman Herzog.

Mr. Weizsäcker, 74, is a liberal intellectual who always seemed to find the right words at the right time to help his fellow citizens grapple with fraught issues such as the legacy of Nazism or racist violence.

While many would have liked to see him stay on, the constitution forces him to leave office on July 1, setting a forbidding standard for Mr. Herzog to match.

But the self-confident Herzog, 60, copied fearfully with a stormy run-up to his election and has already hinted at a radical change of style and perhaps content.

The office of president is intended to be above party politics, endowed with almost

no executive power but a great deal of symbolic significance.

Mr. Herzog's comments so far, delivered with the spontaneous directness for which his fellow Bavarians are known, have already ruffled a few feathers and made clear he is not scared to use his new office to provoke as well as represent.

He has often spoken out against Germany's "law of blood" which makes it very hard for immigrants of non-German descent to become citizens — going against the line of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU), who nominated him.

And he took a risk in a hastily prepared acceptance speech after his election by a parliamentary assembly in May, saying: "Germany must play its role in the world, but in a relaxed way and without bared teeth."

Any hint that Germans should be more relaxed about themselves and their history

could invite the charge of denying the horrors of Germany's past — and Mr. Herzog had to face a wave of criticism from the opposition Social Democrats.

After a bruising campaign where the SPD presented its candidate, North-Rhine Westphalia Premier Johannes Rau, as the "people's choice" because of his huge poll ratings, Mr. Herzog's first task may be to show he can be president of all Germans.

Mr. Weizsäcker was able to claim that mantle almost from the start of his tenure.

Time and again the white-haired aristocrat told Germans the things that their politicians could not or would not.

He set the tone for his presidency a year after taking office with his speech on the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II on May 8, 1985.

"May 8 was a day of liberation," he told the many Ger-

mans who have tended to see themselves as the victims of post-war expulsions and hunger. He went on to remind them of the responsibility that civilians shared for Nazi atrocities.

A former businessman, banker and mayor of Berlin, he repeatedly spoke out for more solidarity with disadvantaged eastern Germans now reunited with the west.

"Uniting means learning to share," he told West Germans in a speech to mark German unification on Oct. 3, 1990.

Mr. Weizsäcker spoke out against racist violence at a memorial service in Cologne last year for five Turkish women and girls murdered in a racist firebombing.

A tireless traveller and worker, Mr. Weizsäcker will not be idle for long. Straight after leaving office he is due to begin co-chairing an independent commission on United Nations reform at the request of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

Liberians fight as U.N. review peace process

MONROVIA (R) — On the eve of a United Nations review of progress toward peace in Liberia, large areas of the West African country are still in the grip of war.

The disarming of former civil war foes has virtually come to a halt and diplomats say elections scheduled for September have no chance of going ahead on time.

"It's going to hell..." said one analyst.

Diplomats said fighters of the renegade Liberia Peace Council (LPC) had taken the

strategic eastern town of Zwedru, near the border with Ivory Coast, from the NPLF within the past few days after a long siege.

Fighting between the two sides had also escalated around the port of Buchanan, southeast of Monrovia, and the highway linking it with the capital was no longer secure, diplomats said.

Mandingo fighters loyal to ULIMO Chairman Alhaji Kromah were battling Krahn dissidents in and around Brewerville, on Monrovia's northwestern fringe, and

Zwedru, near the border with Ivory Coast, from the NPLF within the past few days after a long siege.

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Mandingo fighters loyal to ULIMO Chairman Alhaji Kromah were battling Krahn dissidents in and around Brewerville, on Monrovia's northwestern fringe, and

U.N. feared fighting could spread into the city.

Diplomats and U.N. military observers said claims by Kromah loyalists to have retaken ULIMO's Tubmanburg headquarters from the Krahn were untrue but Mandingo forces were advancing towards the town.

Krahn leader General Roosevelt Johnson has offered to hand Tubmanburg over to the African peacekeeping force ECOMOG. But the force says first disarm his men.

Mandela declares western Cape a disaster area

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela declared the western Cape peninsula a disaster area Wednesday after South Africa's worst storms in a century forced thousands to flee their homes and an oil spill tarnished the tourist region's beaches.

After touring squalid squatter camps destroyed by almost a week of vicious storms, Mr. Mandela told residents sheltering in a community hall:

"The cabinet met this morning to discuss the situation and I have decided to declare the area a disaster."

He added: "All areas hit by damage... will be able to take advantage of the disaster fund."

However the government fund would not be immediately available because the "the wheels of government turn slowly" and a committee had been formed to first discuss how the aid would be best spent.

Thousands of squatters were forced to flee their huts when the worst storms in a century lashed the Cape peninsula over the weekend.

About 200,000 people live in the squalid settlements outside Cape Town and almost every area was affected by the storms, city official Clive Keegan said. "Temperatures plummeted



A resident of the Crossroads squatter camp in Cape Town, South Africa, digs a trench to drain water from homes, which were flooded by devastating storms. The Cape peninsula braced for more violent storms as icy winds started killing rare penguins (AFP photo)

from residents.

The fund will also be used to help clean up after the country's worst oil disaster caused by a Hong Kong-based bulk carrier, the Apollo Sea, which sank on June 20 in stormy seas off the Cape coast with a crew of 36, none of whom are believed to have survived.

The ship was carrying 2,427 tonnes of heavy fuel and 167 tonnes of gas oil in addition to its cargo of iron ore.

"There is no room for people to live in such housing, these houses are nothing but shacks," he said to cheers

penguins weakened by the tonnes of oil that was washed up on two breeding colonies, conservationist Eva Vorster said Wednesday.

The 700 penguins were among 10,000 rescued from nearby Dassen and Robben Islands following the massive oil spill, which also dumped thick black sludge on the western Cape's tourist beaches.

Oil destroys the insulation on penguins' feathers, leaving them vulnerable to the cold and unable to dive for food in the Cape's icy seas.

Ukraine agrees to nuclear safeguards accord

VIENNA (Agencies) — Ukraine has agreed in principle to submit its nuclear facilities to the United Nations nuclear safeguards regime, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Wednesday.

The draft agreement commits Ukraine, which has yet to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), to use nuclear power solely for peaceful purposes and to open its facilities to regular IAEA inspection.

An IAEA spokesman called the agreement a "significant political step" but said Ukraine could not yet become a party to the NPT, which the safeguards regime supports, because it possessed atomic warheads.

President Leonid Kravchuk has pledged to secure quick parliamentary approval for Ukrainian membership of the NPT.

Ukraine's parliament voted Tuesday to debate suspending shipments of former Soviet nuclear warheads out of the country despite an international treaty under which Kiev agreed to send them to Russia.

Ukraine has agreed to transfer to Russia more than 1,600 strategic warheads of the former Soviet arsenal. A

total of 240 warheads have already been shipped out.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Chernobyl power plant, site of the world's worst civilian nuclear accident, is likely to stay on stream for the foreseeable future, albeit under increasingly risky conditions and despite EU financial aid to help shut it down.

President Kravchuk has brushed aside Western pressure for closure and vowed to keep the plant going for at least several more years to cover Ukraine's energy shortage.

In January he issued a decree authorising the reactivation next year of the number two reactor, shut down following a serious fire in 1991.

At a summit last weekend in Greece, the European Union pledged \$75 million towards closing down Chernobyl, where a meltdown in the number four reactor on April 26, 1986, devastated the area around the facility and sent a radioactive cloud across parts of Western Europe.

The Ukrainian government has estimated the cost of shutting down Chernobyl and replacing lost energy output at between \$3.5 billion and \$14 billion.

At present, reactors number one and three are functioning, but under conditions that do not inspire confidence.

Many nuclear engineers have left the plant, drawn to higher salaries and more attractive career offers in the Russian energy industry.

The director of Chernobyl, Nikolai Sorokin, has himself quit and gone to work in Russia.

"Almost every day I see my colleagues leave, usually the specialists," said Alexander Timchenko, who works as a repairman at Chernobyl.

"The only ones who stay on are the ones who have no choice. Why stay? Who knows what will happen? The plant could be closed one day and we'll find ourselves out of a job."

To a greater extent than is the case at Western plants, Chernobyl relies heavily on the expertise of its personnel.

Chernobyl has fewer automated elements that could react in the event of human error or sabotage, explained Etienne Benoist, deputy director of international relations at the French Nuclear Safety Institute.

Then there are money problems, as Ukraine cannot

always afford to buy spare parts in Russia.

"We have already used all the parts we had in reserve," acknowledges Timchenko.

"We no longer change pieces, we just patch up."

An environmental specialist returning to Chernobyl found that "in the control room, there aren't enough light bulbs for the red or green electric signals that are designed to warn of malfunction."

In most cases Ukrainian engineers cannot solve problems at the facility without the assistance of Russian colleagues, who designed the reactors.

French experts have also pointed out design flaws at Chernobyl, notably the absence of a confinement vessel that could prevent the dispersion into the atmosphere of radioactive elements in the event of an accident.

At present, there is a risk the lid on reactor number four, which is resting precariously at present, could collapse, raising a cloud of radioactive dust.

What is needed is the recasting of a second sarcophagus for the damaged reactor, a project that has been discussed by the European Union.

Brazil brace for July 4 clash with U.S. after tie with Sweden

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — Hello California! Brazil got the point it wanted in a 1-1 draw with Sweden in Group B Tuesday to set up a Fourth of July meeting with the United States in the second round.

"It's another opponent that we're going to respect like all others," Brazilian coach Carlos Alberto Pereira said. "If it reached the final 16 it did so on merit."

It was a tie before a sellout crowd of 77,217 at the Silverdome, but almost like a victory for the Swedes, who earned a lot of respect for a gutsy performance against the tournament favourites.

"I'm very proud of my players," Swedish coach Tommy Svensson said. "The first half was brilliant technically. We had some counter possibilities that could have been converted."

Kennet Andersson enjoyed every minute of the game.

"Brazil is probably the best team in the World Cup finals, so it was a good result for us," said the lanky striker who silenced the Brazilian fans' samba drums by the Swedes a 1-0 lead in the 24th minute.

"It was fantastic playing the Brazilians with all their fans," Sweden, which also finished unbeaten in Group B, will probably take on the Netherlands in the single-elimination phase Sunday in Dallas.

A professional organisation has been the strength on the Swedish team since Svensson guided the team to third place in the 1992 European Championships.

"And we'll be well-prepared on Sunday," Svensson said.

Andersson's goal was the first goal conceded by the

Brazilians in the tournament, after blanking Russia 2-0 and Cameroon 3-0 in previous group games, both at Stanford, Calif. where they'll play the Americans.

Romario scored a stunning, solo equalising goal less than two minutes into the second half.

The Brazilians finished with seven points from three games and the Swedes had five.

Russia crushed Cameroon 6-1 in the other Group B game Tuesday at Stanford to stay alive — but only barely — in the tournament. Cameroon's "Indomitable Lions," who became the first African team to reach the quarterfinals in World Cup history in the 1990 tournament, were eliminated.

The Brazilians dominated possession in the first half but created few dangers before the Swedes, playing without suspended striker Martin Dahlin, took the lead.

Tomas Brodin, who was moved from midfield to striker alongside Andersson, twisted past a Brazilian defender and released a well-timed pass out to Andersson on the left.

The striker controlled the ball on his chest and then floated a waist-high volley over goalkeeper Taffarel and into the far corner of the net. "I saw that Taffarel ventured too far out," Andersson said. "So I made a little lob with my right foot."

Brazil's reply came within a minute, a 30-metre shot from Dunga that flashed just wide.

Henrik Larsson had an angled shot held by Brazilian goalkeeper Taffarel at the foot of the post and, at the other end, Rai and Romario powered shots at the Swedish goal but failed to find the net.

Three minutes into the second half, Romario produced his magical goal.

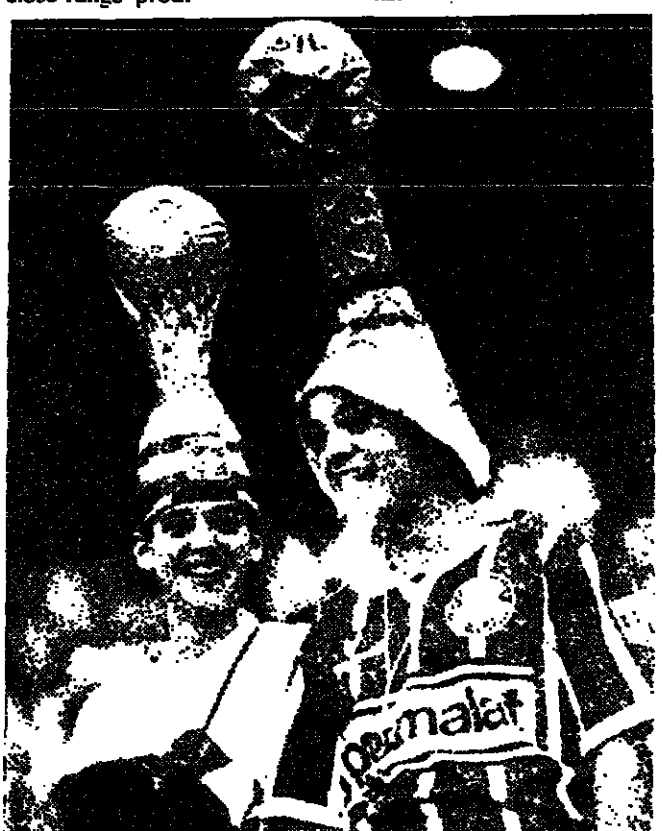
He drifted into shooting range from midfield and found himself with three Swedish defenders moving in to rob him of the ball. None managed to get in a tackle as Romario kept the ball out of their range and then fired a well-placed right foot shot past Ravelli and inside the right hand post.

Seven minutes later, Romario was in the thick of the action again in front of goal but Ravelli stuck out his left leg to block the striker's close-range prod.

Andersson missed a chance to turn home a corner kick late in the game as Sweden squandered the chance to go top of the standings.

But the Brazilians held possession late in the game to move into the next stage of a competition it is favoured to win.

Dahlin, the co-scoring leader with three goals going into the final round of the preliminary phase, missed the game because of a suspension after receiving his second yellow card of the tournament against the Russians.



Brazilian fans wear hats shaped like the World Cup trophy Tuesday as they cheer for their team during the World Cup match between Brazil and Sweden at the Pontiac Silverdome (APF photo)

Salenko scores five goals, leads Russia's 6-1 thrashing of Cameroon

SAN FRANCISCO, California (APF) — Oleg Salenko did not have a clue that he was entering the World Cup hall of fame here Tuesday by scoring five goals in a single match.

"I had no idea what the record was. I did not even know of the possibility of beating it," said the Russian striker after they beat Cameroon 6-1 in their final Group B match. "I only knew of the record when it was announced on the public address system."

Salenko's performance means Russia can still reach the second round by snatching one of the four places for third-placed teams.

The striker was quickly brought back to earth after his historic achievement by being summoned for a random dope control, missing the post-match press conference because he was too busy drinking water and Coca-Cola to meet the demands of a urine test.

His goals in the 15th, 40th, 45th, 72nd and 75th minutes took Russia to their overwhelming victory and made him the tournament's top scorer with six goals. Substitute Dmitri Radchenko, inevitably set up by Salenko, added a sixth with nine minutes remaining.

For Cameroon, who could not repeat their heroics of 1990 when they reached the quarter-finals, at least Roger Milla had one last big wiggle when he scored with his first touch of the ball in the 46th minute.

The 24-year-old Salenko, who hit 16 league goals for Spanish club Logrones last season, was Moscow's last landmark.

"I prefer to call it a team achievement," he said. "We played extremely well, although there was only a



Russia's Oleg Salenko watches his shot soar over Cameroon goalkeeper Jacques Songo'o for his record fifth goal, during second half World Cup action at Stanford Stadium Tuesday. Russia won 6-1 (APF photo)

slight chance of qualification. We wanted to show television viewers back home what we are capable of."

Salenko said his best previous performance was a hat-trick for Dynamo Kiev in the 1990 Russian Cup final against Lokomotiv Moscow. Ironically, the score then was also 6-1.

The last of nine players to have scored the previous best of four goals in a World Cup final was Spain's Emilio Butragueno, against Denmark in 1986.

Salenko denied he would not have started the match had Russia's rebels played. Igor Shalimov, Andrei Kanchelskis, Igor Dobrovolsky, Igor Kolyvanov, Sergei

Kiryakov, Vasily Kulikov and Andrei Ivanov were all left behind after demanding the resignation of coach Pavel Sadyrin for his old-fashioned methods.

When questioned about the absentees Sadyrin said: "That is not a serious question. I feel the team playing today was just as strong as any other team could have been, even without other players who are not here."

Salenko started the rout in the 15th minute, firing past goalkeeper Jacques Songo'o after the ball fell free when Igor Kornejev was bundled over in the box.

A minute later Cameroon's Francois Omam-Biyik struck

the bar and it was not until five minutes from half time that Russia regained the lead. From Kornejev's quickly-taken free-kick Salenko rounded Songo'o and fired into an empty net.

His hat-trick was completed on the stroke of half time from the penalty spot after Victor Ndip fouled Ilya Tsybalyar.

Cameroon, seemingly out of the match, threw 42-year-old Milla into the fray at the start of the second half. Almost immediately the oldest player both to appear and score in a World Cup responded by becoming the oldest player to score in an international match when he shot past Stanislav Cherchevov from the six-yard box.

World Cup group standings

Group A (final)								Group D							
Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Argentina	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Romania	3	2	0	1	5	5	6	Nigeria	2	1	0	1	4	2	3
Switzerland	3	1	1	1	5	4	4	Bulgaria	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
United States	3	1	1	1	3	3	4	Greece	2	0	0	2	0	8	0
Colombia	3	1	0	2	4	5	3	Group E (final)							
Group B (final)								Mexico	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Brazil	3	2	1	0	6	1	7	Ireland	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Sweden	3	1	2	0	6	4	5	Italy	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Russia	3	1	0	2	7	6	3	Norway	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Cameroon	3	0	1	2	3	11	1	Group F (final)							
Group C (final)								The Netherlands	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Germany	3	2	1	0	5	3	7	Saudi Arabia	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Spain	3	1	2	0	6	4	5	Belgium	3	2	0	1	2	1	6
South Korea	3	0	2	1	4	5	2	Morocco	3	0	0	3	2	5	0
Bolivia	3	0	1	2	1	4	1								

Second round matches

SECOND ROUND		Monday, July 4	
Saturday, July 2		At Orlando, Fla.	
At Chicago		Netherlands vs. Ireland 1605 GMT	
Germany vs. Group B or F third place.		At Stanford, Calif.	
1705 GMT		Brazil vs. United States, 1935 GMT	
At Washington		Tuesday, July 5	
Switzerland vs. Spain, 2035 GMT		At Foxboro, Mass.	
Sunday, July 3		Group D winner vs. Group B, E or F third place, 1705 GMT	
At Dallas		At East Rutherford, N.J.	
Saudi Arabia vs. Sweden, 1705 GMT		Mexico vs. Group D second place, 2035	
At Pasadena, Calif.			
Romania vs. Group D or E third place, GMT			
2035 GMT			

3 killed as Mexicans celebrate win

MEXICO CITY (APF) — Three people were killed and 189 were injured Tuesday as thousands of soccer fans celebrating Mexico's advancement to the second round of the World Cup turned violent in the absence of police.

Some 30,000 cheering fans gathered before the Angel of Independence Monument, a central square were spontaneous celebrations traditionally take place, after Mexico drew 1-1 with Italy in the U.S. capital Tuesday afternoon.

Alejandro Calderon of the Red Cross said 23-year-old Jaime Lucas Esteves died when he was hit by a firework. His wife lost a finger. Calderon said most of the injuries were caused when people fell out of moving cars as fans swarmed toward the monument.

Police said the area was in chaos, but Calderon said the frenzy appeared to be dying down.

During the match, the city of more than 15 million was virtually paralyzed. Traffic and business came to a halt as millions watched the 1-1 draw with Italy in Washington that put Mexico into the last 16.

In Los Angeles, police used tear gas on rowdy crowds celebrating Mexico's performance.

Hundreds of youths in the Huntington Park area ignored orders to disperse, and some threw bottles at police.

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مركز المدينة

Nigeria look beyond defeating Greece, plan downfall of Germany

BOSTON, Massachusetts (AFP) — It comes as no surprise that Nigerian coach Clemens Westerhof is already looking beyond Thursday's match against Greece here and plotting the downfall of current world champions Germany.

But it is hard to believe the wise-cracking Dutchman is serious when he says Greece, with the worst record in the tournament, will pose problems for his African champions who routed Bulgaria 3-0 in their first Group D match and walked off with their heads high after losing 2-1 in the second game to two-time world champions Argentina.

"Greece are dangerous," he says. "They have nothing to lose. This will be their last chance they have to impress on the world stage. They are going to go for it."

Exactly how Greek coach Alkatas Panagoulas plans to do that is another question.

Greece only claimed their place in the finals after Yugoslavia pulled out. They were beaten 5-0 one month before the tournament by England, who failed to qualify.

Panagoulas has already tried all his options, fielding 20 of his 22-man squad in their 4-0 defeats to Bulgaria and Argentina.

At half-time against Argentina, he would have

replaced the entire 11 men on the field.

"But World Cup rules limited me to replacing only two," he lamented.

Bankrupt of ideas and with only two players of anything approaching world class, the Greeks have the look of lambs going to slaughter.

"We will try to pull something out of the hat," said Panagoulas.

Westerhof, with a wry smile, said: "Yes, I think they are planning a surprise for us. But maybe they will need 12 men to do that."

Nigeria's forward line is breathtaking, with Rashidi Yekini, blessed with blistering pace and an equally explosive shot, alongside Emmanuel Amunike, a 23-year-old who plays for Cairo's top club Zamalek.

In support is Daniel Amokachi, the powerfully built Bruges striker.

Yekini, who moves to Olympiakos Piraeus next season after finishing top scorer in Portugal with Victoria Setubal, opened the score against Bulgaria and set up Amokachi for the second while Amunike settled the outcome.

Yekini delivered the pass which set midfielder Samson Siasia free to score the goal which gave Nigeria a 1-0 lead after eight minutes against Argentina.

The Nigerians have a new option against Greece. The man singled out by Pete Sampras two months before the World Cup as one of the great players of the future will probably be in the starting line-up for the first time.

In only two years at Eintracht Frankfurt, 20-year-old Augustine Okocha has attained cult status in the German league.

A knee injury kept him out of Nigeria's first game and he appeared for only the last four minutes against Argentina. The midfielder almost turned the game when he split the defence with a superb pass which Yekini failed to convert.

WorldCupUSA



Today's matches

Group D: Greece vs Nigeria in Boston at 02:30 a.m. (Friday) Amman Time
Argentina vs. Bulgaria in Dallas at 02:30 (Friday) Amman time

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Sampras, Becker cruise into Wimbledon semifinals

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Pete Sampras, playing nearly flawless grass-court tennis, overwhelmed Michael Chang in straight sets Wednesday to reach the Wimbledon semifinals and more closely to his second consecutive title.

With his serve-and-volley game in high gear, the top-seeded Sampras looked unstoppable as he steamrolled the 10th-seeded Chang 6-4, 6-1, 6-3 in just one hour, 51 minutes on Centre Court.

Three-time champion Boris Becker also reached the semifinals in straight sets, winning the last 12 points of the match to beat Christian Bergstrom of Sweden 7-6 (7-5), 6-4, 6-3, but continued to generate controversy over his alleged gamesmanship.

Sampras, who still has not lost a set in the tournament, firmly re-established himself as the strong favourite for the most prestigious title in tennis.

In a match that shaped up as the classic confrontation between puncher and counter-puncher, it was Sampras who landed virtually all the blows.

Chang came into the match with a 6-5 edge in career meetings with Sampras, but this was the first time they played on grass.

Sampras served only 8 aces, but he won 77 per cent of the points on his serve, never faced a break point and dropped only 17 points on serve in the match. He has only been broken once in the whole tournament.

Sampras was taken to deuce on his serve in only two



Boris Becker

games. He averaged 114 mph (182 kmph) on his first serve, with a top speed of 128 mph (205 kph). He was also deadly from the net, hitting 17 volley winners and seven overhead smashes.

Chang managed to stay close in the first set, but a single service break by Sampras in the fifth game was enough to clinch it. Sampras lost just five points on serve in the set, which he closed out — fittingly — with an ace.

From then on, Sampras was on a roll. He broke to open the second set and broke again in the seventh game to win the set with a sharply-angled forehand drop volley. He lost only two points on serve in the set.

In the third set, Sampras broke Chang in the third game. After Chang saved two

match points in the ninth game, Sampras ended the contest with a big serve followed by a forehand putaway volley.

Sampras will next face the winner of the quarterfinal between sixth-seeded Todd Martin and unseeded Wayne Ferreira. Becker, the seventh seed, will play either no. 4 Goran Ivanisevic or Guy Forget.

While Becker won comfortably over the unseeded Bergstrom, he caused more controversy with his conduct.

At set point in the first-set tiebreaker, Becker held up his left hand after Bergstrom hit an overhead to signal he thought the ball was long. Becker hit the ball back anyway, but Bergstrom shanked an easy forehand volley. The Swede argued he was distracted by Becker's gesture, but the chair umpire let the point stand.

Bergstrom also grew annoyed at Becker's slow pace between points. At one stage, the Swede sat on his racket as he waited for Becker to serve.

On Tuesday, after losing to Becker in the quarterfinals, Andrei Medvedev accused the German of "cheating" by interrupting him just as he was about to serve. And earlier, Becker was fined for receiving treatment from his personal trainer during a toilet break in his third-round match — an infraction which some players should have resulted in his disqualification.

The women's semifinals are set for Thursday: Martina Navratilova vs. Gigi Fernandez and Conchita Martinez vs. Lori McNeil.

Saudis stun Belgium, move into 2nd round Netherlands win group

Agencies

SAUDI ARABIA, who nearly pulled off a major upset against the Netherlands, completed the effort Wednesday, stunning European power Belgium 1-0 on a magnificent solo run by Saeed Ouwairan to advance to the second round of the World Cup.

In a goal reminiscent of Diego Maradona's run through the English defence in the 1986 quarterfinals, Ouwairan took the ball from midfield past Dirk Medved, sidestepped Michel de Wolf, turned Rudy Smids around and got off a falling shot past Philippe Albert from about the 6 metre line that flew over goalkeeper Michel Preud'homme in the fifth minute.

Saudi Arabia made up for allowing two second-half goals to the Dutch June 20 on the same field in Washington in a 2-1 loss. The Dutch won on Gaston Taument's goal with four minutes remaining.

The victory, combined with the Netherlands' 2-1 win over Morocco in a simultaneous game in Orlando, Fla., gave the Dutch the group title and allowed them to stay in Florida for a second round match against Ireland Monday. The Saudis finish second in the group because of its 2-1 loss the Dutch earlier in the round, and will go to Dallas to play Sweden Sunday.

The Belgians, who led the group coming into Wednesday's game, finished third and will play either Germany

Saturday at Chicago or the Group D winner Tuesday in Foxboro, Mass., in the second round.

"I told you we would take second place in the group, and here we are, delivering what we promised," said Saudi Arabia's Argentine coach Jorge Solari. "Thus was not expected by many people."

Ouwairan's goal was the first goal allowed by Belgium in the World Cup and made Saudi Arabia the first team from the Gulf region to reach the second round at a World Cup.

In Orlando, Florida, Dennis Bergkamp finally lived up to his reputation by scoring the first and setting up the winner for substitute Brian Roy as the Netherlands beat Morocco 2-1 here Wednesday.

Bergkamp opened the score in the 42nd minute but two minutes after the restart Hassan Nader rammed in the equaliser.

Mustapha Hadji, a half-time substitution, broke down the right and his low cross eluded two Dutch defenders for Nader to stab home from closer-range.

But the Netherlands won the match in the 77th minute. Aron Winter, in for Frank Rijkaard, crossed from the right and his centre curled wickedly off Abdelkrim Al Hadrioui to Bergkamp on the left.

He beat his defender and shipped the ball through for Roy to sweep the ball home.

Argentina ready for Bulgaria

DALLAS, Texas (AFP) — A battered and bruised Argentina, already sure of qualifying for the second round, are looking for their third win in a row when they meet Bulgaria in their final Group D match here Thursday.

With six goals in two matches, Argentina suddenly look like serious contenders for the final in Los Angeles July 17 — perhaps against Brazil.

But coach Alfio Basile is determined to keep his players focused on the Bulgarian match.

"We have played well in the first two games. But that is only two games. There are still four more games for us if we are to reach the final," says Basile.

A win against Bulgaria is vital for Argentina to keep their momentum going, but injuries threaten to pose several problems for Basile.

Claudio Caniggia (sore and swollen big toe) Sergio Vazquez (strained ligament in left knee) and Roberto Sensi (bruised thigh) are the latest on the Argentinian injury list.

But Basile insists that injury or not Caniggia will line up.

"Without a doubt Caniggia is going to play," said Basile, who has vowed to play his strongest side against a Bulgarian team that has finally won a World Cup final match after 18 attempts.

But there still remains a lingering doubt over the inclusion of the slimmed down Diego Maradona.

The 33-year-old was the target of the Greek and Nigerian defences and Basile has to decide whether to risk an injury to his rejuvenated star in a match that has no bearing on whether or not his side qualifies.

"I have a lot of respect for Bulgaria. They will be a lot tougher than Greece," he said. For Bulgaria the match is a do-or-die affair. A win could given them a place in the second round if Nigeria fall to Greece.

"Now that we have finally won there is a great burden lifted off the players' shoulders," said Bulgarian coach Dimitar Penev after his side crushed Greece 4-0.

"After so long playing in the World Cup finals and now finally winning, I can't tell you how much it means," he added.

Again Bulgaria will be looking to their \$4-million Barcelona striker Hristo Stoichkov to find a hole in the Argentina defence.

Stoichkov has yet to show his true form here in the World Cup but the match against Argentina is the perfect showcase for his spectacular skills.

"Stoichkov is a real threat to us," says Basile. "When he is on form he is capable of anything."

But the Argentinian defence has only conceded one goal to date, against Nigeria in a match goalkeeper Luis Islas described as hand-to-hand combat.

The Bulgarians are no slouches when it comes to the physical side of the game and the threat of an explosion when they confront Argentina, another physical team, is going to challenge Tunisian referee Neji Jouini.

Islas insists Argentina is not a rough team, but then adds ominously "only as rough as we need to play."

Barkley to stay with Phoenix

PHOENIX (AP) — Charles Barkley, who frequently hinted at retirement while leading the Phoenix Suns to the National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs, said Tuesday he'll return for another shot at the championship despite a back injury.

Barkley, not known for his diligence in the off-season or in the training room, said he was committed to a rigorous course of therapy his doctors say he must undergo to strengthen his back. Retiring now, Barkley told a news conference, would be the "lazy" way out.

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- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A ♠832 ♠K83 ♠AK432
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KJ95 ♠AJ632 ♠A2 ♠74
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?
- Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠10632 ♠QJ ♠AKQ102 ♠84
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠
What do you bid now?
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K10 ♠1064 ♠109 ♠AJ10974
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠
What do you bid now?
- Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠52 ♠K6 ♠A9632 ♠K1073
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

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Syria dismisses Israeli 'warning,' assails Rabin

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria reacted angrily Wednesday to Israeli leaders' warnings that Damascus was going on a rearmament drive that could undermine efforts to bring peace to the region.

"They are a blatant attempt to falsify facts, blow the peace process and escalate tension in the region," said the government published Tishrin newspaper.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Israeli parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee Tuesday that according to intelligence reports Syria had dramatically increased its purchase of tanks and mobile artillery pieces in recent months.

Mr. Rabin said Syria's rapid rearmament meant that the peace process needed to be speeded up. Last week he warned of war with Syria within three to seven years if peace was not reached.

Air force commander Major-General Herzl Bodinger was also quoted in an Israeli daily as saying that the Syrians are reviving their arms trade with Russia, their main patron before the collapse of the Soviet empire. Gen. Bodinger said Syria was buying spare parts at this stage and will move to state of the art armaments later.

In published comments Wednesday, Mr. Rabin said Israel could happily stay on the Golan Heights for 27 more years if Syria is not prepared for peace.

"I want to make peace with the Syrians if they are prepared to prove that they are ready to do so," he told the Jerusalem Report magazine. "We know we'll have to make painful compromises and are prepared for that. But they have to remember that we've been on the Golan Heights for 27 years and we can happily stay there for

another 27."

Mr. Rabin reiterated his belief that the two neighbors will only make progress in peace negotiations, which have been suspended since the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre, if direct talks are held.

"They are wrong in believing that the U.S. can deliver Israel," he told the bi-monthly. "That's the reason they only want to talk to the U.S."

"The Syrians have to understand that they have to talk to us — perhaps after a preparatory phase with the Americans but unless they talk to us there will be no real progress."

Mr. Rabin's "happy to stay" comment clashed with his warning Tuesday that without peace in a few years Israel would have to prepare for war.

"If within three years there is no agreement I will recommend a huge increase in the defence budget so the army can be ready for the possibility of war," he told a parliamentary committee.

He also said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was expected to resume his shuttle between Israel and Syria in mid-July. In Washington, a State Department spokesman said there was a better than 50-50 chance that Mr. Christopher would stop in the Middle East after the Group of Seven summit July 8-10 in Italy.

Mr. Christopher took an Israeli proposal for a phased withdrawal over several years to Damascus at the end of April and returned to the region two weeks later noting that negotiations were "substantive."

Spokesman Michael McCurry said there was no schedule to announce yet. "The parties are at a point

in which they are beginning to exchange substantive ideas back and forth, and at the point that it's useful for him to facilitate that exchange, he's willing to do so, and certainly anxious to do so," the spokesman said.

Before making a firm decision to go, Mr. McCurry said, "we're waiting for the best judgment of those who work as members of the peace team in contact with the parties on whether or not they can recommend to the secretary that a trip would be the proper use of the secretary's scarce time."

The Tishrin newspaper said Mr. Rabin's comments were "a flagrant attempt" to frustrate Mr. Christopher's scheduled tour "even before it starts."

Another state-owned daily, Al Thawra, said Mr. Rabin "has a premeditated intention to derail the peace process and to replace it with secret and unilateral deals."

Al Thawra urged the United States in its capacity as co-sponsor of the Arab-Israeli peace talks to steer the peace process out of the current impasse.

On Wednesday, Syria also condemned an official Israeli report which said a Jewish settler was the only person to blame for the Hebron massacre.

It accused the Israeli government of involvement and said allowing settlers to carry weapons will lead to more massacres of Arabs in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The government daily Syria Times said in a comment on the report: "Arming terrorist settlers and leaving them loose on the streets of Arab cities and towns has actually led to the crime and will certainly lead to many similar if not more horrific crimes," the Syria Times said.



BLASTS: Algerian protesters lie on the ground after bombs injured dozens during a demonstration in Avenue de l'Independence in Algiers on Wednesday (See page one)

(AFP photo)

France welcomes Jordanian moves

AMMAN (Petra) — French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet said Wednesday his country welcomed Jordan's recent initiatives in the peace process and described the Kingdom's moves to regain its rights as coming at the right moment and aimed at safeguarding pan-Arab rights and not Jordan's rights alone.

Stressing that Jordan's role is central and crucial in the peace process, the ambassador said the Kingdom had contributed positively towards efforts for a lasting settlement in the Middle East.

"In France's view a final settlement for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would have its direct effect on Jordan and so Jordan should have a role to play in the final peace framework in the region," the ambassador said.

Reiterating his country's rejection of Israel's annexation of Jerusalem, Mr. Bajolet said France was concerned over the continued building of Jewish settlements on Arab-owned lands, especially around Jerusalem.

He said safeguards should be provided to ensure religious rights of all the followers of the three monotheistic religions in Jerusalem.

He noted that France was backing the peace process at the multilateral and bilateral levels.

Despite the fact that France has no direct role in the peace process, it has been maintaining contacts at the bilateral level with all the concerned parties in order to give impetus to the peace efforts, Mr. Bajolet added.

In addition, he said, France was doing all it can in cooperation with its European partners to provide economic aid to the countries of the region as part of the efforts to enhance the peace process.

France believes Europe

should not suffice itself with the role of "a treasurer" but should take active role aimed at establishing a just and durable peace, he added.

Mr. Bajolet said the fate of Europe is closely linked with that of the Middle East and therefore France is concerned with ensuring the success of the peace process.

Expressing hope that progress will also be achieved on the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks, the French ambassador called on Israel to withdraw completely from the occupied Golan Heights and Lebanese territories so that peace could be achieved.

Diana settles lawsuit with gym

LONDON (AP) — Princess Diana has settled her lawsuit against a London gym where she was secretly photographed as she worked out. Her lawyers said that the La Fitness Gym has apologised for the pictures, and will remain permanent injunction to stop it distributing any photographs of the princess taken at the club. But law firm of Mishcon De Reya said the princess will be pressing ahead with suits against the company's partner Bryce Taylor, who took the photos, and against Mirror Group newspapers, which published them in November. The pictures were obtained with a camera hidden in the ceiling above a piece of equipment the princess was known to use. "La Fitness has expressed its regret to the Princess of Wales about Mr. Taylor's unauthorised action," lawyers Mishcon De Reya said. La Fitness will contribute towards Princess Diana's legal costs, the statement said, but it did not disclose the amount involved.

Spain moves to liberalise abortion law

MADRID (AFP) — Proposals to change Spanish abortion law, put forward by Justice Minister Juan Alberto Belloch have angered both conservatives and the Catholic Church. Speaking to members of the General Council of the Judicial Power, which oversees Spain's courts, Belloch said abortions should be more freely available during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy. At present women in Spain may only seek an abortion if they have been raped, if the foetus is deformed or if the mother's life is in danger. The government is saying abortions should also be allowed in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy if a woman faces "serious personal, family or social problems." A spokesman for the Spanish Episcopal Conference, which represents the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, said the government had profited from the summer and the World Cup, which allowed it to put through the proposals "discreetly." Social Affairs Minister Cristina Albari said Spanish society was becoming more and more tolerant and had received news of the plan with "serenity." Ms. Albari said she hoped the General Council would issue an opinion on the matter in July and allow the proposals to be presented as a bill in the Spanish Parliament in September. Conservative magistrates were opposed to the plans while left wing legal groups such as Judges for Democracy have wholeheartedly supported them. The right wing Popular Party, the government's main opponents, is against any change in abortion law and has called the proposals a "smoke screen" designed to "distract public opinion."

Intimate Graham Greene letters to be auctioned

LONDON (R) — Letters revealing intimate details of a love affair between author Graham Greene and the American wife of a British aristocrat will be sold next month, auctioneers Sotheby's said Tuesday. The correspondence from Catherine and Catherine Walton, wife of Harry Walton, to her sister Bronie Duran are expected to fetch £9,000 (\$14,000) when they are sold in London on July 12. They reveal a tortured 12-year affair that inspired some of Greene's best work and spanned one of his most creative periods. "The letters are very important because they shed some light on a very shadowy area of Greene's life," said Peter Seeley of Sotheby's Books and Manuscript Department. "It is one of the most important relationships in his life in terms of its influence on his work and his creative unconscious." Although the affair has been known since Greene's death in 1991, the correspondence reveals the intensity they both felt. In one letter Walton describes Greene as "a strange, tormented person but intelligent, kind and I think tremendously good. I think very much and wish did not suffer so much with very real melancholia."

Arab money for Palestinian self-rule remains elusive

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press
AMMAN — For decades, Arab governments proclaimed that the Palestinian struggle was the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But now that Palestinians desperately need money to set up self-rule, Arab leaders are keeping their chequebooks closed.

The World Bank is coordinating \$2.2 billion pledged in international aid for Palestinian self-rule over the next five years. Of that, the Arab states have contributed less than \$150 million.

The United States has pledged \$500 million; the Europeans \$577 million and Japan \$200 million. "In the past, many Arabs claimed...that an agreement with Israel and the PLO would be enough to make them join in the peace accord immediately," the International Institute for Strategic Studies notes in its latest Strategic Survey.

"Suddenly, the order has changed, and not just because PLO independence took them by surprise. Some are preoccupied by the price they would have to pay for the agreement."

The study stressed that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat "needs the support of the major Arab states...there will be many mouths to feed and Arafat needs quick economic successes to win the support of the Palestinian public."

The Arabs' reluctance to part with their money is partly because most are in rough economic shape themselves.

Even the oil-rich Gulf states, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's traditional bankrollers, are facing an economic squeeze because of the 1991 Gulf war and last year's slump in oil prices.

The Saudis, for instance, slashed spending this year by 20 per cent.

The Gulf states have also still not forgiven Mr. Arafat for supporting Iraq for the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait which led to the war.

For years, the bulk of the PLO's money has come from Arab states, usually given to influence the policies of the various Palestinian factions.

Major contributors changed as relations with the PLO fluctuated. But there has never been much love for the PLO, particularly its hardline elements, which espoused revolution in the Arab World.

Despite Arab leaders' lip service to the Palestinian cause, relations with the PLO have sometimes been rocky.

Saudi Arabia kicked in \$100 million — albeit with a little judicious American arm-twisting — when world donors met in Washington last October.

"If Saudi Arabia and other Arabs have the money and are ready to give it, then they'd want to ensure that it goes to the self-rule entity, not the PLO," Judith Kipper, a Middle East specialist at Brookings Institution in Washington, told the Associated Press.

Last month the Saudis and their Gulf partners did produce \$18 million to help pay the running costs of the self-rule administration Mr. Arafat

fat is setting up in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Palestinian representative Nabil Shaath said that "broke lots of taboos by many countries. ...There was a feeling that Arab brothers had abandoned us."

He expressed hope the Saudi move will loosen purse strings in the Gulf.

But analysts believe the Gulf states will insist on channeling any future contributions through the World Bank.

Georgetown's Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said Gulf Arabs may be "hiding behind the World Bank's insistence on accountability. It's a good excuse for their hesitancy."

The World Bank is reluctant to hand over money to Mr. Arafat without strict accountability. The donors, fearing corruption, nepotism and wastage in the PLO, are also leery of simply pumping money into Palestinian coffers.

When he sets up his interim administration in Jericho, Mr. Arafat wants no-strings Arab money in his pocket to dispense patronage and buy loyalty, as he has always done.

Last month, with Mr. Arafat insisting he needs \$150 million in his pocket before he goes to Jericho, the donors agreed to provide \$42 million as start-up money.

Another \$35 million for running costs may be sprung loose when the donors meet July 10-11.

said Benjamin Netanyahu, predicting Mr. Arafat would try to come to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, said on Israel Television that he believed Mr. Arafat might try to sneak into Jerusalem on the Sabbath, when religious Jews would not be able to organise a demonstration.

Aharon Domb, spokesman for the settlers council which represents 144 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, said settlers planned mass demonstrations and were seeking a religious ruling from leading rabbis to permit protests on the Sabbath.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Many Russian emigres have mental disorders

TEL AVIV (AFP) — One third of the 500,000-plus immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union suffer from mental problems and need treatment, according to a report published Wednesday. Only 10 per cent of the newcomers had problems when they arrive, but after 30 months in Israel more than 30 per cent developed symptoms, a Jerusalem mental health centre found in a survey. The Talbyeh centre questioned 2,500 immigrants and found the stress was linked to problems of adapting to Israeli society and not specifically to unemployment or housing shortages. Woman and people aged between 55 and 65 were particularly prone to mental disorders, said the report in the Haaretz newspaper. More than 500,000 people have settled in Israel since late 1989 when the Soviet Union opened the floodgates.

Iran opens Koranic verse telephone line

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranians can now get a direct line to hear verses from the Koran via a new telephone service. The Iranian telephone company Wednesday opened a "Neday-e Koran" or voice of the Koran, line for up to 12 callers at a time, according to a report by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) monitored in Cyprus. Callers dial Tehran telephone 114, a figure which signifies the number of chapters in the Holy Book, and hear a recorded incantation of verses by the well-known Iranian reciter Ali Parizgar. IRNA said currently available recordings comprise six chapters of the Koran. It added that the service would be expanded at a later date to accommodate 28 callers.

Iran denies holding Israeli aviator

NICOSIA (AP) — Tehran denied that an Israeli aviator who disappeared over Lebanon in 1986 is being held in Iran, but gave no mention of Israeli claims he may be in South Lebanon. The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday "allegations made by a Zionist regime on the presence of an Israeli pilot in Iran" as a "sheer lie" according to an Islamic Republic News Agency dispatch issued Wednesday and monitored in Cyprus. Israeli officials have maintained that Iran is holding Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad captive in Lebanon by way of its Revolutionary Guard Corps stationed in the Bekaa Valley. Oded Ben-Ami, spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, told the Associated Press Wednesday that "Israel holds Iran, or Iranian officials in Lebanon, responsible for Ron Arad." However, he declined to discuss Arad's precise whereabouts.

Libyan lawmaker calls for U.S. talks

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — A Libyan lawmaker called on Wednesday for talks with the United States, saying that if U.S. officials could meet with Yasser Arafat they should be able to talk to Muammar Qadhafi. "We want to solve our problems with the United States," Saad Mujber, foreign affairs secretary for the Libyan General People's Congress, told reporters at the end of a four-day visit to Malaysia. Mr. Mujber earlier visited South Korea, Japan and New Zealand for what he said were talks on economic and cultural cooperation. In Malaysia, he focused his remarks on the United States. "The United States has recognised people it once termed as terrorists such as Yasser Arafat. So why can't it accept and welcome us?" he said. "There is no reason for that now as Washington recognises all these movements which have become legitimate governments."

Beilin heads for Washington

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin left Israel Wednesday on a four-day trip to the United States to meet State Department officials, congressmen and U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, an official said. Mr. Beilin travelled to Washington several weeks ago to ask for U.S. help in restarting Israeli-Syrian negotiations stalled since a Jewish settler massacred more than 30 Muslim worshippers in Hebron on February 30.

Arafat to visit Gaza Saturday

(Continued from page 1)

sula is the nearest airport to the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat would then cross into the Strip by road via Rafah.

A Palestinian official in Tunis said Mr. Arafat was to leave for Cairo from the PLO headquarters in the Tunisian capital later on Wednesday.

Asked why Mr. Arafat had chosen to visit the Gaza Strip first, rather than Jericho, Dr. Shaath said: "I see no symbolic value in it."

A spokesman said Dr. Shaath had telephoned only Wednesday afternoon with

the request for a three-day visit starting Friday.

"It has to be seen if two days is a sufficient amount of time given the security problems the visit poses."

Mr. Arafat last set foot in Palestine in the summer of 1967, fording the River Jordan at the start of an undercover adventure through occupied land.

Israeli right-wing leaders claimed Mr. Arafat planned to visit Jerusalem, despite Dr. Shaath's denial.

"This is a national embarrassment, allowing a murderer to enter Gaza and Jericho,"

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